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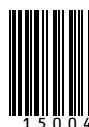
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Do you find your nose out of joint when, after travelling for days, you roll into a town you've never seen before, and are confronted by the smiling face of a certain Colonel or the infamous yellow M of a burger franchise? Then, you find that the town's major store has familiar signage and is crammed with brands you recognise; or all the new vehicles on the streets are imports from back home. Where is the difference you drove so far to experience? It's comforting in one sense, but you feel cheated. Blame the so-called big global village, in which mass-production is making the world a blander, far too homogenous place.

It's one of the reasons we like to customise our vehicles; to make them unique as well as more capable. And it's also why we at SA4x4 derive genuine delight from an older vehicle that's been restored and used as it should be: for off-road travel.

Last month we featured a pristine 1950 CJ-3A built from all the best bits and pieces of the Fifties-era Jeeps, which is put to frequent good use on the roads and trails. And, man, it has *houding*. So it follows that, this month, we couldn't resist a story from contributor Claus Heydenrych, who is also something of a Jeep nutter. He decided to take his original 1948 CJ-2A, also chock-full of the uniqueness we crave, on an eight-day journey from Cape Town to Windhoek – all the while racing at a top speed of 80km/h from the clutches of an epic storm.

Someone who didn't quite escape the clutches of a storm is Ronald Hairbottle, the well-known owner of 4x4 Traction and builder of radical 4x4s capable of tackling those Grade 5, and worse, trails. His 4Runner was plucked from a river-bed that turned from a trickle to a raging torrent in seconds, and washed away out of sight. His tale of rescue and recovery is real can-do stuff.

Less can-do-recovery is the subject of this month's tale from Roger Gaisford, sure to tickle the memory banks of anyone who lived through the mid-Seventies in Botswana, and specifically in Francistown, when it was still a rough-and-ready place barely separated from the warring goings-on in the then Rhodesia.

Our technical piece this month tackles the issue of differentials: how the various systems work, and how, with lockers, you can turn your rig from capable to virtually unstoppable. And then, for good measure, we feature a vehicle that really is pretty unstoppable: how about a hydraulically operated half-metre of wheel travel on each axle and steering front and rear? Rad indeed.

Angus Boswell

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RESCUED FROM BIG TOM'S LOOP, HWANGE, ZIMBABWE

My 12-year-old daughter, J, and I decided that a trip to Vic Falls over Xmas and New Year 2014 would be an exciting adventure. So we opened up the money-box bottles, counted out the change and found that we had almost R3000 – enough to get us to Vic Falls from where we live on the Garden Route! Getting home would be another challenge.

We planned a slow drive up, camping along the way, and a fast return trip. Day 1 takes us to Hopetown, Day 2 to Botsalano (a hidden gem), Day 3 to Francistown, and on to the Woodlands Stop Over. Day 4 is the long drive to Panda Rest Camp, Pandamatenga, where we are the only campers. Unfortunately, the next morning our fridge stops working. Oh, well; we'll have to eat all our frozen food within two days. Meanwhile, there is a big build-up of thunderclouds, some lightning and a few spots of rain... but nothing serious.

Panda border is a breeze, with friendly people. I ask what the road is like through the Matetsi Safari Area, down to Robins Camp in Hwange. I'm told there are many muddy patches, but only one 'bad' patch, where quite a few have become stuck. We leave, confident that we'll arrive at Robins.

It's an interesting drive, with elephant, giraffe, sable antelope and impala – plus a few muddy patches. We check in for three nights, though pay for only two nights, as we intend moving to Sinamatela. We're one of four vehicles in the campsite.

After setting up camp, we have time to enjoy the surrounds. It's a typical Zim rainy season. The clouds mass, huge thunderheads form and disperse, then form again.

Off for a game drive at about 15:30; anticipation building. It's raining and the roads are littered with muddy spots, especially in the vleis areas, but we get through with momentum, four-wheel-drive, and luck. We end up at Deteema Dam, where a ranger tells us a pride of eight lion is about.

Back at camp, we cook most of our remaining food and resolve to head out on an early game drive. After coffee, we unpack what we don't need and are out of the gate by 06:00. The roads are wet and slushy after the overnight rain – we turn back from one or two roads, because they look too-little-used and too muddy. I eventually decide to head down Big Tom's loop: it's relatively short, so we should be back by 09:00 to enjoy an early brunch.

Big Tom's seems fine, although there are no fresh car tracks and there are quite a few soggy patches. After about 6km, we come upon a soggy patch about 30m long. I stop, engage 4x4, and pick up a bit of speed, approaching the mud puddle at about 20km/h. Thwack, I hit a submerged log. My left front wheel goes over the log, but as it goes over, it tilts the log which jams into the left-back wheel, lifting the whole left side of the bakkie up, then down with a thud, and a dead stop!

I get out with some trepidation – this is a National Park, and a pride of lion has been seen not far from here – and find that we're almost up to the chassis in mud. There's no room to fit a spare wheel and a jack underneath the vehicle, and nowhere to anchor my winch. Cell-phone reception? – forget it.

After half-an-hour, I manage to remove the offending log, and start to dig mud. It gets hotter. I try everything I know; place rocks, logs and sticks under the wheels, but we just sink deeper.

At 10:00, I admit to my daughter that we need help. I am caked in mud, and my clothes are like cardboard. What do I do? Do I walk? The GPS says we're only 7.8km from Robins by road. Luckily we have water, about five litres, and food, so we're not in any immediate trouble.

The hours pass. My daughter, J, becomes upset when I say I'll walk, and I can't leave her on her own. So we wait.

The GPS indicates that we are south of Robins Tower;

perhaps we can signal, using the stainless-steel oven dish. J climbs onto the roof but can't see anything except trees. I dare not climb up myself, given my ample body.

I left the camp chairs in camp, so even sitting in the camper back is uncomfortable. Eventually I start hooting an SOS call, short, long, short. Someone might hear... but nothing comes.

Towards evening, more rain comes. The puddle gets deeper. We adjourn to the back of the camper for some tinned baked beans and smoked mussels. After 19:00, in full darkness, I start the engine and turn on the lights and spotlights, hoot an SOS and flash the lights. With the lightning and the thunder all around, there's very little chance anyone will hear or see us.

The night is very disturbed. Neither of us sleeps well. It's not only the situation, but the singing frogs! I think I can make out about 50 different frog locations and at least three species.

The next day, the sky is clear. We eat little; neither of is hungry. We discuss water rationing. We can always filter puddle water through a dishcloth. It's now 24 hours since we've seen anyone.

I remind J that we are safe; we won't starve or die of thirst. In fact, we can survive at least a week. The main thing is for someone to notice that we are missing: not in camp. Relatives are expecting us in Victoria Falls on the 24th (today's the 23rd), so, if we don't show up, they'll set the clockwork running.

I wonder whether the camp staff has noticed that we are not there; that the tent, camp chairs and braai are standing unused.

At around 09:00, I hear a small aircraft approaching. I aim my Cree T6 LED torch at it, finally realising what that annoying strobe is for. But the plane flies on.

It gets hotter. Time passes geologically slowly, I watch the storm clouds as they turn and change.

Then I hear something, faintly. I get out of the cab and, yes... there is definitely a faint sound, getting louder. It's a helicopter. I run to the back of the camper, get the torch, and jump onto the tailgate. A small cream and green chopper appears, flying west to east. I jump up and down, flash my strobe. The chopper turns towards us. I shout to J, "They've found us!" The pilot flies over, I signal that we're stuck (swipe my finger across my throat), and he waves, circles. My mood lifts immediately and J is smiling.

A few minutes later, the sound intensifies again and the chopper returns, the pilot obviously looking for a landing spot. He lands on the road, about 250 metres behind us. I walk about 150 metres and a chap in khaki and green walks out of the

bush to greet me – the Area Manager for Robins, Mr Midwel Kapesa. He shakes my hand and says that when we hadn't returned to camp by 19:00, they became worried and started the process of searching for us. He apologetically says they were unable to do much at night, but had contacted the Zim Parks head office in Harare in the morning and been given permission to call in the chopper from Vic Falls to search for us. He says that, as their Land Rover is out of action, he'll have to send the tractor to pull us out.

Just after 14:00, I hear a strange sort of thunder that becomes louder. Within a few minutes, a tractor comes around the bend at speed, with a driver and two rangers. Within a couple more minutes, I've packed up the floor mats I tried under the wheels, the muddy shoes, the caked clothes and sealed up the camper roof. By this time, the rangers have boots off and trousers rolled up and are immersed knee-deep in mud so that they can hitch a rope to my tow bar. The tractor hardly puffs – and we are out.

On the way back to Robins, J and I decide we are going to drive to Victoria Falls and sleep in a house. Back at camp, we find the tent, gas stove and chairs are as we left them, but everything else has been put away in safe storage. Our dirty washing has been washed and everything is tidy. While we're taking a welcome hot shower, the camp attendants wash the car and fold the washing. After showering, we pack up camp, to leave for the Falls.

Mr Kapesa comes walking down to the camp, and I have a horrible feeling that he's going to ask me for several hundred dollars to pay for the rescue... but he simply wishes us well, reiterates that we were wise to stay with the vehicle, and says he hopes we come back to Hwange sometime. I give Mr Kapesa my remaining dollars to share among the rescue team.

I would like to thank Mr Kapesa and the team for their dedication and efficiency. I am a Zimbo by birth and fondly remember the wonderful years as a child, but have grown a little sour and negative with age, especially living and working in Africa. I can't quite put my finger on it; it's a lack of expectation, I suppose. I don't expect good service, good governance or good road maintenance. When it comes to Zimbabwe, I expect very little. So, the efforts of Zim Parks, and Mr Kapesa and his staff in particular, are a 'wake-up' call for me.

They not only saved us from the bush, but renewed some of my lost faith in humanity.

Vic Cockcroft

This month's winning letter by Vic Cockcroft wins an LED Awning from Ironman which retails for R3495. This 2.0m long and 2.5m (extended) self-supporting awning is made from waterproof ripstop canvas, mounts onto most roof racks and load bars, and features a 1.2m 12V LED strip.





DISCHARGING RANGER

I own a new T6 Ford Ranger 4x4 double-cab 3.2 manual, 2012 model, which is used mainly for overlanding and camping. I have no problems with the vehicle and am extremely happy with it, except for a problem with the battery.

The bakkie comes standard with a 50 amp-hour battery, the auto with a 60Ah, which is low for a 4x4 workhorse; so I replaced mine with a 70Ah Raylite.

The problem is that when I am camping and the vehicle stands in one place, the battery drains extremely fast with the normal opening and closing of doors. I keep all the interior lights and radio off when the vehicle is stationary. With the ignition off, a meter shows a draw of close to 4 amps, which only reduces when the doors are closed and locked. This is impractical while camping.

The battery went completely flat on three occasions while I was away in remote areas on different trips, and the engine had to be jump-started. I had fully charged the crank battery before these trips, using a smart charger. On my return, I had the alternator tested and the battery load-tested, and both passed with flying colours.

As I sometimes travel alone, I went for a dual-battery system with a new 100Ah lead-crystal battery and C-Tek D250s dc-dc set-up. I also have a solar panel for topping up when we stay for long periods in one place. On a recent 8000km trip through the Kaokoland and Namibia, the new second battery worked perfectly and never dropped to below 12.6V with all the accessories running – including a fridge – and with topping up now and then with the solar panel. Unfortunately, at Epupa Falls, I tried to start the bakkie after it had been standing for two days and the crank battery was completely dead. Luckily I was able to get a jump start from another camper.

I was told by C-Tek that the D250s does not charge the crank battery at all from the solar panel (only the second battery), and therefore any draw from the crank battery by the car's computer while it is stationary for any length of time leads to disaster.

Opinions on an American blog on the matter are that when the doors are opened and closed while camping, the computer reads a battery draw and readies the alarm system – taking 1.5A; plus the radio also stays on for a while, searching for Bluetooth devices. The blog also states that the Ranger has a 'smart charge' system which draws current until the doors are locked.

Note that when I left the vehicle locked at home for three weeks while I was away, it started easily after this period, although the meter did read a low 11.8V.

My question is this: Can this smart-charge system be re-programmed to shut down when the vehicle is stationary with the doors unlocked, or is there a fuse one can pull to disable this function?

We camp extensively and believe a 4x4 vehicle should not be unable to be used in camping style. At this stage, my option is to install a cross-over switch on the second battery and just accept the problem, or use a second solar panel to charge the crank battery when standing. Any ideas out there?

Alan Moseley

Ed: Any feedback on this problem would be appreciated. I am sure Alan's problem is not confined to the Ranger, so a simple and effective solution must have been discovered by one of you technical boffins out there. Email any replies to angus@sa4x4.co.za



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READER POLL

What scares you the most when camping in the bush?

1. Carnivorous game – 5%
2. Creepy crawlies – 5%
3. Snakes – 22%
4. Other 4x4 drivers – 68%

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HALFWAY TO HELL

Before the Chinese started improving Lesotho's infrastructure by constructing gravel freeways, most main roads in Lesotho were a great 4x4 challenge. The adventure would begin immediately at the base of Sani Pass and continue throughout on most roads, making Lesotho a great 4x4 destination.

Unfortunately, this has all changed, and most 4x2 vehicles are now able to negotiate Sani Pass and most main roads in Lesotho with ease.

So, for my son Craig and me, the 4x4 challenge in Lesotho had largely been eliminated – until I received an e-mail early in 2014 from Gerald O' Brien of Halfway Toyota in Scottburgh.

Gerald's itinerary set out what appeared to be serious off-road trips through Lesotho, and the one which caught my eye was the November 2014 trip to Semonkong, Katse Dam and Senqu River. His trip preview indicated this as an excellent 4x4 route through the Maluti Mountains, requiring low range, diff lock and occasional road-building. It was recommended that running boards be removed and that recovery gear, emergency rations and water be packed.

Having made the booking through Gerald, we got a team of enthusiastic 4x4 guys together, and accompanied by James Martens, headed to the rendezvous point at Glen Reenen Rest Camp in the Golden Gate National Park on 20 November. There we met the other four members of our team: Chris Dini, David Southwick, Tony van der Merwe and Gerald 'O Brien, our guide.

The next morning, our convoy of a Colt, Triton, two Ford Rangers and Gerald's FJ Cruiser headed to Peak Bridge border post via Ficksburg, where we refuelled our vehicles. In Lesotho, we made our way with ease along mainly tar roads to Semonkong Lodge, where we met the other two members of our team, Andre Greef and Ralph Koen, both farmers from Scottburgh, in their Toyota Hilux.

From here, we started to tackle the serious part of our trip, which began after we turned off the road to Mount Moorosi and headed over the escarpment of the Senqu river valley.

The six-vehicle convoy, led by the FJ Cruiser which repeatedly showed its off-road mettle, meandered up and down what can only be described as a mini road to hell. In fact, the word road is misleading, since throughout this four-day excursion, we were literally navigating our way along bush tracks, passing through traditional Lesotho villages and making several river crossings.

Over three days we camped and braaied at different locations along the Senqu River. Day One took us from Semonkong Lodge and down the escarpment. Day Two took us to Katse dam via the Senqu River valley pass, and on Day Three we travelled via St Martin's Mission to Tlokoeng.

The degree of difficulty in negotiating the bush tracks required the skills of experienced 4x4 drivers. In this respect, we were expertly assisted by Gerald, who guided us (on foot) through and over the worst of the stony obstacles, which sometimes appeared to be impassable.

It is amazing how we tend to underestimate the ability of our vehicles, which were in low-range much of the time. At two points on this trip the gradient was so steep that the automatic transmission temperature warning light flashed on my upgraded Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 diesel, forcing our convoy to wait 20 minutes each time for the engine to cool down; which it duly did, so that we could continue our adventure.

This was a real 4x4 trip, packed with real challenges and breathtaking views of the great mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. I would estimate that it was five times more extreme than Sani Pass, prior to the pass being upgraded, and not a trip for the faint-hearted or those not travelling in convoy.

We exited Lesotho via the upgraded Sani Pass, which, by comparison, was plain sailing, and knowing that notwithstanding Lesotho's new gravel freeways, there are still some challenging 4x4 routes to be explored.

Clive George

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MY TRUSTY CONDOR

Early in 2001, my husband decided that it was time to replace our old car, so one Saturday morning we went into East London to shop for a new car. We started at the Toyota showroom, and the first car we saw as we walked through the door was a shiny red Condor. It was love at first sight, and, after looking her over and taking turns to sit in the driver's seat, we placed our order for a blue, 3.0-litre diesel, 4x4 Condor. We christened her Connie.

Two days after she'd arrived, we set out on the first of many journeys off the beaten track in South Africa. She didn't even have 100km on the clock before, as we passed a bus going the other way, a box flew off the top and hit the grill smack in the middle. We stopped to assess the damage and found, to our disappointment, that the grill had cracked. We wondered if this were a bad omen and that maybe we would regret our decision to buy that particular car, but that has proved to be the only bit of bad luck we ever experienced.

In 2002 we moved from East London to Luderitz in Namibia, and we planned to explore Namibia just as we had explored South Africa. But, sadly, it was not to be, because my husband passed away suddenly eight months later. In 2006, I decided to do some exploring on my own, and I took my Condor on a tour of Damaraland. Travelling on your own is not very satisfying. You need someone to share the experience with.

I then joined some South Africans who were touring the Kgalagadi and drove from Luderitz, through South Africa to McCarthy's Rest, and into Botswana, to meet up with them in Mabuasehube. I drove the 4x4 trail to Nossob with them and enjoyed the experience so much that I wanted more, so I started searching for a travelling companion.

I eventually found Malcolm, an Englishman with a love of Africa, and he turned out to be the perfect travelling buddy. We started with a tour of southern Namibia, and the next year we went to Etosha and Damaraland. We then explored the Kalahari and the Kgalagadi, and last year I started planning for the big one – a three-month-long trip through six African countries.

When I told my friends that I was going to tackle this trip in my old Condor, they were sceptical. "She'll never make it," was the general consensus. "Get yourself a proper 4x4," they said.

Yes, she's old and she doesn't have good ground-clearance, but she is a Toyota. And not only do they go on forever, but spares are available everywhere in Africa. I have read many accounts of people driving to the Serengeti or Dar es Salaam in a Condor, so I never doubted her. The only change I made was to have an extra spare wheel fitted to the back.

We finally set off on our mammoth journey on 6 October 2014, and returned safely to Luderitz on 4 January 2015. We had covered 16 625km and driven through Namibia, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

We had to replace the rear wheel bearings in Mbeya, Tanzania; but, other than that, we had no other mechanical problems – not even a puncture. My trusty old Condor took the whole trip in her stride and she's ready to tackle whatever I choose to throw at her next.

Connie turned out to be the best car I have ever owned. I have travelled all over Namibia and made two trips to East London and back, on my own. Other than locking me out in the middle of nowhere one afternoon, she has never let me down, and I love her to bits.

Cynthia Jansen van Vuuren

ATTENTION ALL TOYOTA OWNERS!

We're giving away a selection of Toyota-branded clothing and gear – from Hilux caps to Land Cruiser duffel bags, and even a Fortuner branded purse! To take advantage of this offer, simply share a short story (300 to 500 words) about your Toyota, whether about a trip you've done, or something that demonstrates your Toyota love-affair. You can send your submissions to editor@sa4x4.co.za. Please include a pic or two!

This month, Cynthia Jansen van Vuuren wins a Fortuner ladies' wallet and a Hilux backpack.



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FAN OF OLD JEEPS

I loved the picture on the cover of the March issue of SA4x4 magazine. It brought back memories of almost 50 years ago, when I was a young officer in the Royal Australian Air Force, based in Townsville, Northern Queensland. I was a very new Pilot Officer, and on my first night as duty officer, I was given one of these Jeeps as my duty vehicle. This was a left-hand-drive version, one of many new ones that had been abandoned, in their crates, when the Second World War ended and the Americans returned home.

Well, I did my duty officer duties, roaming around the airfield. Becoming aware that this little Jeep was fun, I decided to go off the roads and runways and do a bit of cross-country driving. Which was great, until I got bogged down in some mud, in the middle of the night, a long way from where the duty driver was.

I tried everything, but could not get it out, so I walked back to get help, and the duty driver came out to assist me. When he arrived, he asked me what I had done to get the vehicle out of the mud, and I told him I had tried pushing it, but it would not move.

At which time he pointed out to me that I had been in four-wheel-drive, low-ratio, and I would never have been able to push it. Idiot me! Still, a valuable lesson, and I remember those jeeps with great fondness.

Douglas Hendry

TO LOCK OR NOT?

I own a 2005 Kia Sorento 3.5 V6 Petrol AT with a low-range transmission. The vehicle does not have a diff-lock. Do I need one for an overland trip through Namibia or Botswana? If so, please will you advise what to do and where to go in Gauteng, and also explain the differences between (the pros and cons of) front vs centre vs rear diff-locks?

Manuel Reis

Ed: You're in luck, Manuel, as we carry an article in this issue under the Workshop banner that explains differentials and diff-locks. You might well not need a diff-lock for your trip to Namibia and Botswana, depending on your route, and particularly if you travel with others who do. However, a locker will add an extra level of safety and ability for when things get rougher. For more advice, call 4x4 Traction in Polokwane, who specialise in lockers.

OVERLANDER'S CODE

In response to a growing number of complaints about how we conduct ourselves in the wilderness, we decided to draw up and promote a code of conduct for overlanders. We'd like to include your input, comments and debate, so please send your suggestions to editor@sa4x4.co.za.

FIREWOOD IN Take your firewood in with you; don't chop down trees or gather dead wood within parks or wilderness areas.

KEEP QUIET We go to the bush to appreciate the sights and sounds of the bush. No music, and nothing louder than a spoken conversation.

RESPECT LOCALS – LAWS AND PEOPLE

Obey the rules of the place you're travelling through. Respect locals and their traditions; if they don't like having their photos taken, don't take photos.

SUPPORT LOCAL TRADE Your spending money at the local shops and lodges will make them see you in a different light.

FIRES Never leave your fire untended; do cover burnt coals, and leave no trace of your bush camp.

ENGAGE LOW-RANGE 4WD There's nothing better about tackling an obstacle in 2WD; you're likely to damage the terrain, cause soil erosion and potentially harm a sensitive ecosystem. You've paid a premium price for your vehicle's low-range capabilities; use them.

LITTER OUT Don't leave any litter behind. Pick up any litter you come across. Dispose of litter outside the park or wilderness area.

MAKE NO NEW TRACKS - Perhaps one of the most important ones from an environmental perspective.

POO – BURIED

TOILET PAPER – BURNED

GENERATORS Switch off your generator before sunset; or, better yet, don't start it in the first place.

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS – BIRDS INCLUDED

DEFLATE YOUR TYRES Softer tyres not only improve your 4x4's off-road abilities, they enhance ride comfort and decrease the impact on the environment.

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ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN

On 30 September 2014, my wife and I were in our hired 4x4 Nissan bakkie when it swerved off the gravel road and rolled, just outside Omaruru, about 150km north of Windhoek. Despite some bad injuries, we are thankful to be alive, probably due to the relatively low speed at which we were travelling – 100km/h – and the fact that we had our seatbelts on.

On returning that afternoon to the Windhoek offices of the company we had hired from (name withheld), I was shocked to discover that I was being held liable for the full value of the car – approximately R170 000. I had paid an excess of R25 000 and had expected that to be the maximum extent of my liability. However, it was pointed out that we had been driving above the company's limit of 80km/h, which made us liable under the negligence clause. I signed my acknowledgement of negligence without thinking clearly about what was going on. I was still in shock after having had a near-fatal accident a couple of hours before, and my wife was lying seriously injured in a hotel room. I paid because I was told that the insurance company would not cover this accident as we had been driving over the stipulated limit.

During the accident, the car had suddenly swerved for no apparent reason. We thought we had lost control, and in the heat of the moment did not consider that there might have been mechanical failure, but a subsequent assessment by a panel beater showed that the right front wheel had essentially collapsed. Whether this happened before or during the accident is difficult to determine, but the vehicle landed back on its feet after rolling twice, and this was the only wheel out of alignment.

The following morning, I asked the owner about the possibility of mechanical failure, given that we were on a straight piece of road with no apparent obstructions, but we did not resolve anything. Only later was I made aware of the panel beater's report.

On returning home to Johannesburg and seeking legal advice, I was informed that I would have been entitled to see evidence of the insurance company's assessment before paying. Numerous subsequent efforts to obtain a copy of the policy from the company have not succeeded.

My wife and I are wanting to share this experience to help others avoid getting into a similar situation. Our observations would be:

Ask for the full contract, including the insurance policy, before entering into a deal. We decided to hire from (name withheld) on the basis of emails which contained no references to the 80km/h limit, and which set the excess at R25 000 with no mention of the negligence clause. We were told merely that the vehicle was "comprehensively insured". All the qualifying conditions were put to me at their offices as we were collecting the vehicle, and I was not concentrating on the full implications of the contract when I signed the papers. In the event of an accident like that, call your insurance company or your lawyer straight away to know what your rights are.

If possible, ask for a copy of the latest service record and recent travel history before taking possession of the car. This is especially the case with 4x4s, as one does not know where the vehicle has gone before. We went only from Windhoek to Etosha and back, and did virtually no off-road driving. We cannot prove that we were given a damaged vehicle, but we do believe this could have been the cause of the accident as there were no rocks or potholes or other obstructions at that point in the road.

Lastly, wear your seatbelt at all times and drive with exceptional care on the Namibian sand roads. Subsequent to our experience, we have heard from many people about numerous serious and fatal accidents there. If one is in control, the roads seem easy to drive on, but as soon as one loses control it is like skating on ice.

Peter van Ryneveld



Got something to share, write to us at editor@sa4x4.co.za





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GEAR



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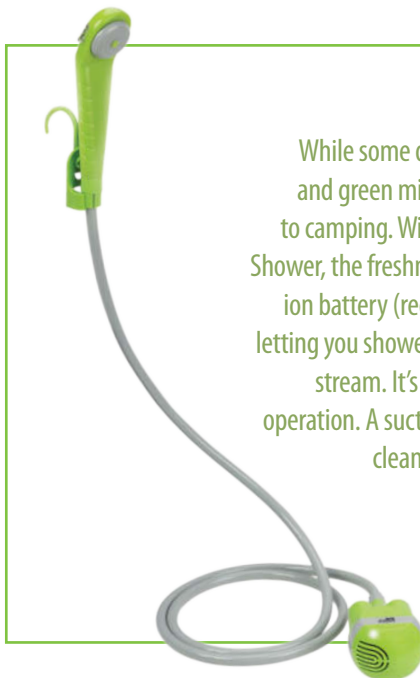
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Prices are correct at time of going to print, but may vary between outlets. We suggest you call your nearest outlet to confirm prices.

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HOMIE ★RUN★

Terrible roads and the mother of all Cape storms are no match for a 1948 CJ-2A Jeep on an eight-day adventure to Windhoek

WORDS & PICTURES **CLAUS HEYDENRYCH**







For years, it had been my dream to move back home. Although I hadn't actually lived in Namibia for 16 years, I'd always called it home, because "home is where your heart is" or "home is where your roots are" or, in the words of Pumba in *The Lion King*, "Home is where your rump is." I guess all these sayings are true. It's whatever place you long to be; and, for me, that was with my family back in Windhoek, Namibia.

I had always had a great passion for Willys Jeeps; some might even call it an addiction. Over the years, living in SA, I'd put together quite a collection of flat-fender jeeps and parts,

which made my move back home a bit of a mission.

A week before my departure, Charlotte, a friend, came to assist me with the task of packing. She was put in charge of selling some of the household valuables, while I arranged transport for my Jeeps.

During this transport planning, I had a thought. Why not embark on this venture in one of my beloved Jeeps, and make it a trip I would never forget? I shared the idea with Charlotte, and she, too, was keen to take on such a venture.

So it happened that a trip was put together: a journey in one of my CJ-2As, from Cape Town to Windhoek.

The trip would take us up the West Coast all the way to Alexander Bay, and, from there, we would head north-east through the Richtersveld to cross the border at the Sendelingsdrift pont. Once in Namibia, we would meet my brother at Aus and travel in convoy up to Windhoek – and the aim was to avoid the highway and stick to gravel roads wherever possible.

A storm warning

This was during winter, and the weather predictions didn't look so charming. In the days leading up to final departure, we kept a keen eye on the weather forecast; what had been normal rain gradually turned into a forecast of



Opposite page CJ-2A is pristine as it leaves Cape Town. **Left** We were drenched by driving rain on the highway, our ponchos ripped to shreds by the wind. **Below** Storm warning at Solitaire in Namibia was small comfort, as our top speed remained 80km/h, whether on tar or gravel.



storms, and warnings of extreme conditions. This was not good news, considering that we would be travelling at a snail's pace in a semi-open Jeep fitted with a canvas top... unpleasant, to say the least! Our sedate trip was turning into a race against Mother Nature as the storm rolled in from the Atlantic.

We had to leave Cape Town as quickly as possible, so we packed the Jeep with five jerry cans, a swag (a tent-like sleeping bag), a tarpaulin and some warm clothes. A last-minute decision was made to ditch the route along the west coast and travel along the N7 instead, in order to put some land between us and the cold front heading for the mainland.

We left Durbanville at noon. A roadblock awaited us near Malmesbury, and when we explained to the lady officer that we were destined for Namibia, she simply said *"Is julle dan*

f.... mal om in so 'n kar te ry? Die ding het dan nie eers deure nie."

Yes, those were her exact words... it seemed that not everyone approved of our vehicle of choice. Her lack of support did not put us off our mission, though, and we defiantly continued on our merry way.

Heading over Piketberg pass, we looked back at the ominous cloud build-up which was following us. We had to win land, so, further north up the N7, it was full throttle at 45-50 miles an hour (70-80km/h). It was boring to travel on the highway, and we had to keep left as other motorists overtook us, either waving with a gesture of disbelief, or simply annoyed because they'd been tailing us at a crawl and unable to overtake.

As night fell, we trundled past Klawer. There still was a long way to go, and the voice of the officer was a constant echo. Perhaps we were mad, after all?

Driving at night was scary at times. We felt vulnerable in the little Jeep – the faint glow from our taillights barely made fast-approaching trucks aware that there was 'something' on the road ahead. I kept an anxious eye on the rear-view mirror, worried that we would be rammed from behind.

Still, we decided to push through to Springbok to escape the rain – which, according to weather updates on our phones, was destined to reach the border by morning.

At 00:30 we rolled into Springbok. The first drops were falling, adding to our urgency to get the Jeep under shelter. We managed to find a hotel, where I asked if we could park the Jeep in the storage yard. Under the cover of a tarpaulin, she would remain dry. As I tugged her in, I was proud that the 65-year-old lady had performed so well over the first 600km stretch.



THE VEHICLE

Willys Jeep CJ-2A (all original)

Year model: 1948

2.2-litre side-valve engine

3-speed gearbox





Left Jeep at home among all the oldies outside Solitaire, where the best Apfelstrudel south of Germany is to be found. **Above** No respite from the rain, which followed us all the way to Rosh Pinah, when things brightened up. **Below** Some respite from the danger of speeding trucks as we amble along parallel to the Orange River.

Toughing it out

It rained that entire night – the cold front which had caused havoc in the Western Cape had reached Springbok. There was no way it would end soon, so we had to continue our journey in the wet. On went layer upon layer of clothing in preparation for the gruelling trip that lay ahead; but we were cold, as the wind swept through the Jeep's open cabin. The constant downpour drenched the canvas top, leaving us wet, and offering little protection from the harsh conditions.

As we headed down the long, straight stretch towards the Vioolsdrift border post, the sun broke through the cloud cover. We were soaking wet, because the cheap plastic ponchos we had bought in Springbok had been ripped to pieces by the wind buffeting the open cabin, so the bit of sunshine was a blessing. As we crossed the Orange River, we smiled at each other, knowing that we had survived the worst.

Over the border

In Namibia, we set off west on the C13. Now, we were snaking along parallel to the Orange River, away from the highway and speeding traffic. The jeep purred silently along, cruising the damp gravel road – in its element. What a delight.

When we reached Aussenkehr, it started to rain again. Unable to camp, we spend the night at Norotshama River Resort, so were able to enjoy a hot shower and regain some feeling in our cold, stiff limbs. The next morning, we set off again, following the C13 which continued winding through the beautiful Orange River vistas all around.

The weather turned again. This time the wind picked up, and we pushed to reach Rosh Pinah. Soon we were bracing ourselves against a fully-fledged storm with heavy rain and gale-force winds; the entire town was flooded, and trees had been uprooted. We were unable to continue and had to settle for solid shelter – this time at the Rosh Pinah Hotel. The Jeep was again

Right Entering the Tiras Mountain Conservancy; freezing at night. **Below** Looking out over the wide spaces at the Sossusvlei campsite, and bundled up against the cold. **Far right** Fixing the exhaust hanger broken by the corrugations on the D707.

packed away under a tarpaulin to ward off the onslaught of the elements.

We awoke to see a ray of sunshine peeking through the chalet window. It was the perfect ‘calm after the storm’. We packed up, left the devastation behind, and headed north towards Aus. This was a scenic route with plenty of game sightings along the road, and the Aus Hotel was the rendezvous where we would meet my brother and his family.

Under the stars

We reached Aus about lunchtime. My brother was delighted to see us, but also said what others had been thinking: “You’re mad, brother!” After enjoying a German lunch at the hotel, we filled up the Jeep and all the jerry cans and set off together, once again following the C13. From this point, the Jeep would not set a tyre on tar until we reached Windhoek... and there would be no more hotels or chalets; just starlit skies and a swag awaited. The first camp would be on a private farm in the Tiras Mountains Conservancy, and we set up camp as night fell. The temperature rapidly dropped to freezing point, but it was cosy sitting around the campfire in the company of my family. Sipping on a sherry, I thought, “It feels great to be back home.”

The next day, we headed in a westerly direction on the D707. The road was in very poor condition with plenty of corrugations; there was simply no ideal speed to travel on this horrendous road. We adjusted the tyre pressures, hoping that not all the bolts on the Jeep would rattle loose.

Not too far down this ghastly road, we had our first breakdown. The rear exhaust hanger had torn, which led to a crack in the tailpipe as it dropped. Luckily it was nothing major, and my brother had plenty of makeshift supplies at hand. A section cut from a recovery sling made a suitable replacement for the hanger, and the sheet metal from a



TRIP FILE

8 days, 1822km

(829km tar; 993km gravel/track)

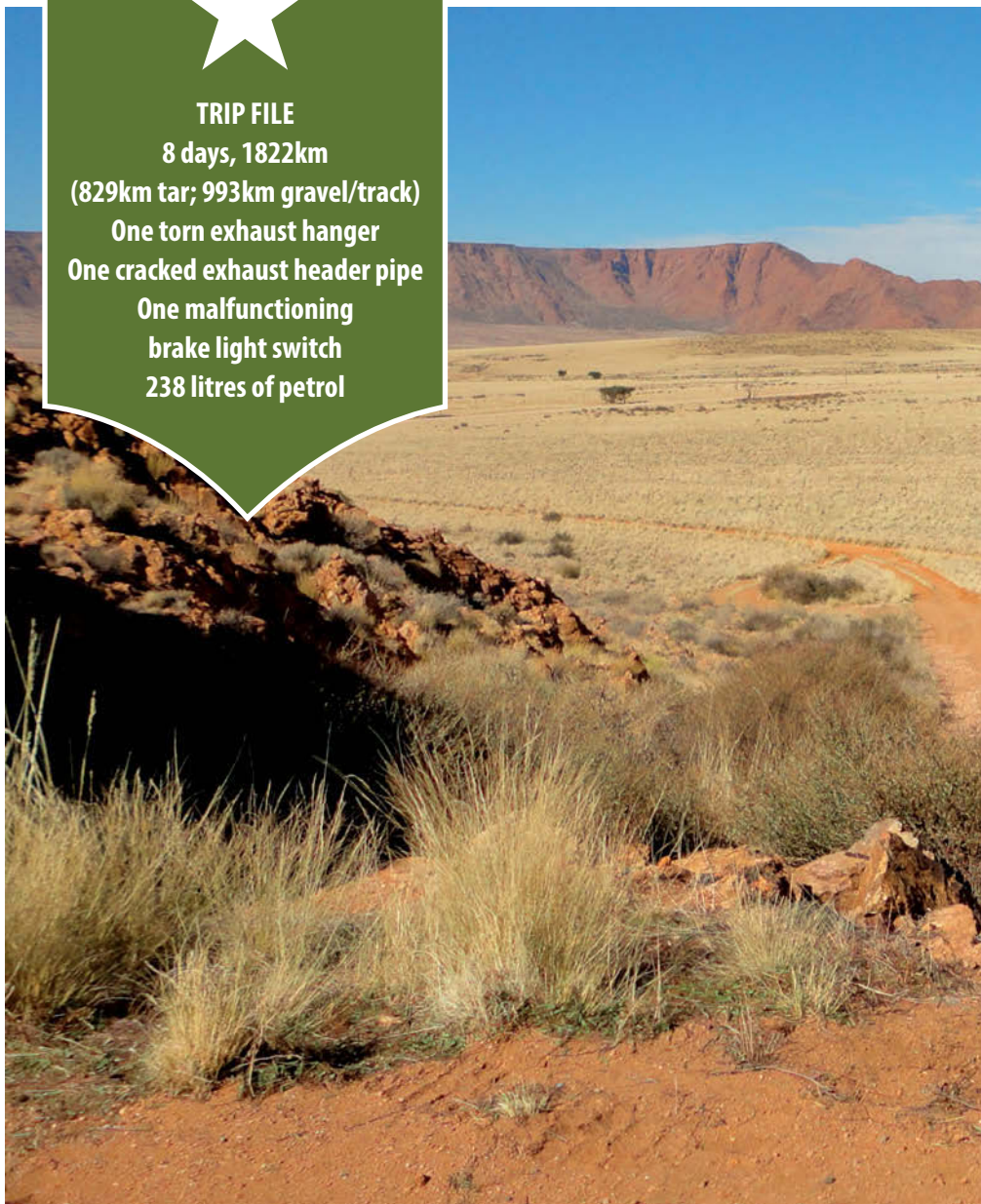
One torn exhaust hanger

One cracked exhaust header pipe

One malfunctioning

brake light switch

238 litres of petrol





The roads and the weather improved, and the Jeep gave no further problems.

Inset Tar final leg to Windhoek, and home.

beer can, with some hose clamps, patched the broken tailpipe nicely. We were good to go again.

Unfortunately, we'd lost a lot of time performing the tailpipe repair; and, with the early winter sunsets, we were unable to reach our intended campsite. So we camped at Betta, the next available spot en-route. The camp provided only the bare necessities, but it was a pleasant-enough stay.

Sossusvlei and beyond

We headed NE the next day, aiming to reach the Sossusvlei campsite – it wasn't a long drive, and we knew the camp provided neat and well-maintained stands. We enjoyed a lovely sundowner before dinner, which was yet another *lekker tjoppie* on the braai. The next morning, we fired up the 'donkey' boiler and enjoyed a hot shower, washing off the deposits of dust before we tackled the day's driving.

The poor road conditions continued, but the wide-open landscapes made up for that. It is amazing how much more one sees when driving at a slower-than-normal speed. The openness of the Jeep, and even the constant taste of dust, added that extra ambience of adventure to the trip – it was all part of the fun and the experience. Here, Charlotte and I took turns driving the Jeep; she quickly mastered the double de-clutching technique needed to change smoothly to second gear.

The next stop was Solitaire. This was one of the milestones of the trip – I'd kept promising Charlotte the best-ever Apfelstrudel south of Germany. As we tucked into Moose McGregor's mouth-watering Apfelstrudel here, the wait was finally over. Sadly, Moose passed away in 2014; but his legendary recipes live on and the Desert Bakery is still open. So, for anyone ever on this route, it is a must-stop.

The last leg

From Solitaire, we continued on the C14. The next destination was Namibgrens



Guest Farm via the Gamsberg Pass: the campsite is situated amongst some granite koppies which provided good privacy, and the neat stands had all the necessary facilities. We were sorry that this would be our final camp. We enjoyed another *lekker braai* and reminisced about the past days.

With mixed emotions, we packed the Jeep the next morning, knowing that we would be heading for civilisation. We bade farewell to the friendly hosts and set

off on our final leg of the Cape Town-Windhoek-Willys trip.

The condition of the gravel roads began to improve and the worry about having the Jeep disintegrating was finally over. As we passed through the Kupferberg Pass, the last stretch of gravel road was over. I was finally home.

My trusty Jeep had lasted the entire trip, and I was sad to have to actually stop. The regret disappeared, however, as we pulled up in front of my mum's house.



The Jeep got to rest after the long haul, and I had a moment to truly marvel at my CJ-2A's durability at a tender 65-years-young. What an epic homecoming: a trip I will not soon forget.

The toughened-up city girl, Charlotte, had really surprised me. Coming along on this trip, hanging in through the gruelling weather and the Jeep's lack of luxury, yet always sparkling with a smile on her face – I couldn't have asked for a better companion. ■





TRAVEL • ZIMBABWE

Granite Castles & Ringing Rock

Nestled 35km south of Bulawayo is a delightful corner of Zimbabwe that is off the main overlanding routes. This is Matobo National Park, where seasoned travellers Rene Bauer and Andrea Kaucka were rewarded with some unusual sights and sounds

WORDS & PICTURES **RÉNE BAUER**





Rock art fills the surfaces of the many caves in the Matobo National Park, giving some insight into the rich spiritual life of ancestors from up to 13 000 years ago. **Right** Nissan Patrol dwarfed by one of the giant baobabs in the park.

Zimbabwe – the “House of Stone” – is one of our favourite countries in southern Africa, despite its turbulent past and difficult present. It really is very different from its neighbours. We have, in the past, spent a lot of time here; have crawled around in the remotest corners, and simply fallen in love with scenery and inhabitants alike; but within this country there is one place of outstanding beauty and scenery that holds a special kind of attraction. Matobo National Park.

Meeting up

Can you rely on a person who has no mobile phone, no email address or any

other nod to 21st century technology? This was the question Andrea and I were asking ourselves as we entered Zimbabwe through the Plumtree border and made our way towards Bulawayo, capital of Zimbabwe’s Matabeleland. We were there on the recommendation of Graham and Bianca, two extraordinary people touring southern Africa in a Land Rover, whom we had met in Hlane National Park in Swaziland. Graham had claimed to be the grandson of Cranmer Kenrick Cooke, a Zimbabwean archaeologist who had discovered and analysed San cave paintings in the – then – Rhodesia, and had written various books on the subject.

We’d been a bit doubtful, but had agreed to meet up with them at the municipal campground in Bulawayo on a certain date. We had planned to take a closer look at Matobo National Park together, as Graham had often been there as a young boy and knew a few lesser-known corners of the park. However, there had been no connection with them in between; we had just Graham’s word that they would be there.

To answer my introductory question – yes, you can rely on someone like that, because we did meet Graham and Bianca. Not on the municipal campground, however, but at the Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage, 20km outside Bulawayo: a sanctuary



owned by Graham's relatives. Were we impressed! All we still had to do was stock up on food, diesel and water, plan our route, and set out on this little expedition. Andrea and I had been in the Matobo park before, but this time was full of surprises.

Painted rocks

Coming into Matobo is like landing on a different planet. It is an absolutely magical landscape composed of granite hills (or *kopjes*), huge monoliths called "whaleback dwala" and soft, golden plains in between, dotted with acacia trees. There are rivers, little dams and lakes. Matobo is a national park of a different kind: one doesn't come here exclusively for the animals or landscape, but for something much more intriguing than that – marks of southern Africa's first ancient inhabitants.

The Matobo Hills region spreads out over 3100 square kilometres; the core

424 square kilometres was declared a national park in 1926. This makes it the oldest park in Zimbabwe, and one that, because of its rich cultural heritage, is on the UNESCO list of world heritage sites.

When one is driving through the park, the imagination goes absolutely wild: rocks start looking like castles, camels, mushrooms or people, sometimes delicately balancing on top of each other. One of the key Matobo landmarks, visible from far off, is a rock outcrop called "Mother and Child". Sir Cecil John Rhodes, the famous British explorer who lent the former British colony his name, was so impressed by it that he wanted to be buried in these granite hills.

This awe-inspiring granite scenery has been shaped by the action of wind and water over millions of years, creating a landscape full of overhangs, caves, shelters and balancing rocks: a perfect base for early human settlement.

Southern Africa's early inhabitants, the San or Khoisan people, left their marks all over Zimbabwe, but with the highest concentration of cave paintings in the Matobo. The paintings are between 2000 and 13 000 years old, and (considering their age) most are still in a very good condition.

What made the San decide to live in the Matobo area? They were hunter-gatherers, relying on a constant food supply from the land. They collected wild plants, nuts and fruits, and hunted or trapped wild animals. And, thousands of years before, the ring of granite hills surrounding the Matobo had created its own ecosystem, well supplied with water, and hence rich in both plants and wildlife – as it is today.

The sheer number of cave paintings in the area prove that fact. The San lived in groups of up to 25 people, mostly using overhangs and caves as shelter. It's in these places that the paintings can be found. Mostly drawn by the



Above Some of the paintings are proportionally accurate, others speak of an alternative reality. Riddles on rocks. **Top right** Granite boulders perform another balancing act, like ancient towers. **Right** Plenty of water flows in from a number of rivers, explaining why this area was an easy choice for hunter-gatherer populations. **Far right** There are still many small villages in the region.



San shamans, the paintings represent a cultural heritage, symbols of the San language and visions. They also seem to express the daily life of the hunter-gatherers in the Matobo, giving us a glimpse into San life.

It is much more difficult to guess at the San spiritual world from the paintings. There are paintings of people with animal heads, giant snakes carrying people, long oval shapes – all very intriguing, but we visitors find it hard to guess at their meaning. A closer study of the various paintings reveals that clearly different drawing

styles were used: some paintings show intricate patterns and a very high accuracy in representing animals and people, and others look more or less primitive. It took us a while in Siloswane Cave, for example, to find out that some of the two-metre long shapes were not horses with tusks, but elephants.

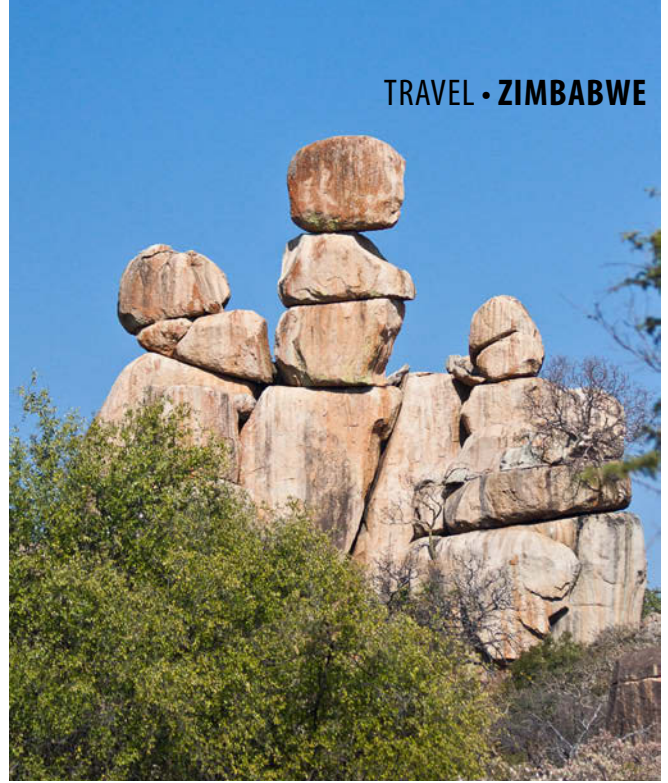
What is also very interesting is that a lot of flintstone tools and beads have been found around the caves, adding insight into San life and culture.

There are several large and famous caves in the Matobo region which

are frequently visited, and have, unfortunately, been extensively damaged. It drives us absolutely mad to find charcoal writing on top of the paintings, saying things like “Steve was here,” or something along those lines.

Pomongwe Cave, with its adjoining visitor centre, is a good example. The paintings here are faded and can hardly be seen; one so-called archaeologist even tried to paint over them in 1965 with linseed oil to protect them, which caused even more damage.

That’s why it’s worth making the effort to look for the caves which are



a little more hidden or harder to get to – like Nswatugi Cave or Bambata Cave, which are up in the hills and can be reached only after a bit of walking. But, once one is standing on top of a mountain right at the entrance to a cave and looking over the surrounding scenery, it quickly becomes clear why the San people chose these places: the magic here is unforgettable, and the views are breathtaking.

What makes these moments more special is that the paintings are not forever. Not only are they under threat of destruction by tourists and the

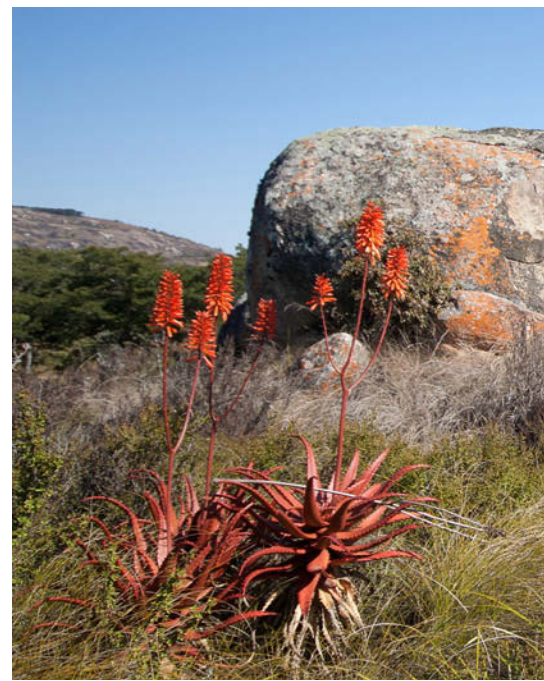
uninformed, but are also subject to the natural processes of weather erosion and exfoliating granite.

We had made camp at Maleme Dam a few kilometres away from the Visitor Centre, and we set out from there every morning to explore the granite hills of Matobo and to discover more cave paintings. What a nice feeling it is to wake up to the calls of the Chacma baboons, and see their silhouettes high up above our camp. The rich bird-life around us was also rewarding, and our travel companion, Graham, was able to name almost every bird we saw.

Search for the rock gongs

There was another element on our Matobo agenda which was cause for much excitement: finding the ringing rocks or “rock gongs” of the Matobo Hills. Graham remembered seeing them as a little boy, but was now not too sure about where to find them. We made it our private little expedition to venture deep into the hills in search of them.

The only thing Graham remembered was a track that led from one of the main routes, which, after some searching, we found and followed. Well, track is an overrated word. It



Above Leopard and Verreaux's eagle among the rich species life in the protected portion of the park.

Far right Mysterious marbles on the landscape signal that we have reached the area of the rock gongs.

Below Hollows in the rock caused by repeated knocking during ceremonies, which liberate an eerie, bell-like sound of various timbres.



soon became a little trail and a few more kilometres on, we were advancing at walking speed, basically pushing our cars through the man-high grass, dodging bushes and branches, and often pausing to walk ahead and check out the terrain. The good thing was that we had two cars, which gave us much more confidence about being in this remote area than we'd have had alone.

The feeling of being on a different planet became stronger as we explored the Matobo from this unknown side. Sometimes we went through narrow

valleys, and then, suddenly, the most beautiful, breathtaking views would open up: all these granite castles lying below our feet, stretching out as far as the eye could see. Sometimes Graham remembered a rock formation he had seen as a little boy, so we had the feeling that we were on the right track.

Soon after we had manoeuvred our cars over one rough and rocky patch, the trail, or what was left of it, suddenly disappeared – and we came upon a grassy plain surrounded by granite hills. Could this be the end of our 'ringing

rock' expedition? Far in the distance, on the other side of the plain, we saw some movement, and realised that the shapes were locals cutting the long grass to make thatch for their roofs. Graham had a brief conversation with the grass-cutters, and – bingo! They understood what we were after.

One woman showed us the way, and after we'd been walking for 20 minutes, the excitement was mounting. We discovered more rock paintings on the way, and then we saw what looked like giant round marbles scattered on a huge



rock face. There were deep hollows in their sides from hundreds of years of drumming. We all looked at each other, and smiled.

We picked up small rocks and started to hit the first rock gongs, which gave off a sound like a metallic drum. Apparently they were used to gather surrounding Shona and Ndebele tribes and chiefs for a meeting, or simply to play music during ceremonies. Some of the rocks made louder sounds than others, but all had

those white, cup-like markings on them.

That there are these special rocks is surely not a thing many people know about Matobo; and, for us, this discovery added to the already stunning allure of this beautiful national park.

When we had to leave and head back to civilisation, after nearly a week of exploring the park, we felt a little sad: the granite castles, rock paintings and magic of this stretch of land had put us under its spell. ■


FACT FILE

- Mzilikazi, founder of the Ndebele nation, is said to have named this region of granite kopjes the Matobo, or Matopos, Hills — which means “Bald Heads”.
- Situated 35km south of Bulawayo in southern Zimbabwe, the Matobo National Park covers an area of 424 square kilometres, and is managed by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. Zimbabwe’s oldest park, it was originally established as Rhodes Matopos National Park as a bequest from Cecil Rhodes. In 2003 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- A 100 square kilometre section has been declared a game park and stocked with white rhino, which can be seen along with other rare sightings — including leopard and Verreaux’s (black) eagles.
- The Matobo region covers an area of 3100 square kilometres, extending along the valleys of the Thuli, Mtshелеle, Maleme and Mpopoma rivers, so is well supplied with water. The Matobo Hills are said to contain more than 3000 registered San rock-art sites (the highest concentration in southern Africa), dating back to settlements 13 000 years ago, and a number of middle-stone-age archaeological finds and artefacts dating back 500 000 years. The Mwari religion, which is still practised in the region, may date back to the iron age, and believers regard the dramatic rock formations as the seat of the ancestral spirits.
- The major cave sites are Bambata in the west, on the Kezi-Bulawayo road; Inanke Cave, reached by a hike from Toghwana Dam; Nswatugi Cave, accessed from Circular Drive west of Maleme Dam (and also the access point for Pomongwe Cave); and White Rhino Shelter near Gordon Park.
- There are seven camps in the Matobo National Park, the main one being Maleme Camp, with a variety of accommodation options — from lodges to camping.



STORY & PICTURES **RONALD HAIRBOTTLE**

WASHED AWAY



It started innocently enough. Ronald Hairbottle of 4WD Traction and a couple of his mates were going to have a crack at the extreme Carnage Canyon river-bed 4x4 route near Polokwane in Limpopo Province. A perfect weekend adventure for Ronald and co-driver Gert in his radical 4Runner, and friend Johnny and Johnny Jnr in a tricked-out yellow Hilux dubbed Truggy. Then the rain started pelting down...

PART 1: THE FLOOD

The weather was beautiful when we left Polokwane at 06:30 on Saturday. Entering the river at the normal place just after the bridge wasn't possible, as it was completely overgrown, so we entered further upstream. The river was flowing just enough and it looked like the trip would be easy.

Johnny's Hilux Truggy was working well, and the trip was proving uneventful, until we entered the gullies. Here the Hilux got a nasty sidewall slash on a front tyre from a small protrusion on a big rock. Luckily the tyre didn't de bead, thanks to the beadlocker we had installed. (With these beadlockers, the Truggy runs 0.15 bar in front and 0.10 bar at the rear.)

After traversing Dead Dog Gorge, a normally soft and treacherous ascent, and crossing a couple more obstacles, we arrived at the beach around midday. We lazed around for

the rest of the afternoon, swimming and snoozing.

At around 16:30, it started raining, and Johnny's tent was rendered useless by a gust of wind. Suddenly the water level began to rise and our camping spot on the beach became flooded. We packed up in record time and parked our 4x4s on the higher ground at the other side of the river. To our surprise, the water level began to subside, and we thought it might soon stop raining. Unfortunately, our relief didn't last long.

The next moment, and without any warning, Johnny shouted: '*O f... Hier kom dit!*' In a split second, I'd leapt up and was racing, with Johnny, past the wall of water to our left. Johnny Jnr and Gert were clever enough just to run up the side of the mountain past our gazebo.

By the time I got to my 4Runner, I was waist-deep in the water. I waded past it, went up the rock, fell down and



Left Truggy in action.
Above Nasty split in the sidewall on the first day. **Below** Water levels starting to rise at our campsite in the river bed.



started taking a video. This was all of 10 seconds after Johnny's warning shout.

I prayed that Johnny's Truggy would be okay. We were separated from the others and Johnny was worried about Jnr. We tried shouting over the thunder of the water, but couldn't hear a thing. Then I watched in dismay as the water first tugged at my 4Runner, then grabbed hold and washed it down the river until it went around a corner and out of sight.

We were wet, cold, hungry and shoeless, sitting against the rock face and waiting for the water to subside... but we were out of luck. The torrent persisted until around 23:00, when Johnny could chance it across, through pounding waist-deep water, to bring the other two back to our side. Later, I tried sleeping in the Truggy's

bucket seat, but the rocks were more comfortable. Apart from everything else, Johnny was feverish as he had the flu.

At first light we got the Truggy going, on a mission to find my 4Runner. We had no food and no clean water: nothing but the clothes on our backs. We switched off our phones as we had no chargers and the batteries were getting low by this point. Our plan was to take the easiest lines down the river, but – as it was still pumping from bank to bank – 'easy' was the last thing our drive would be.

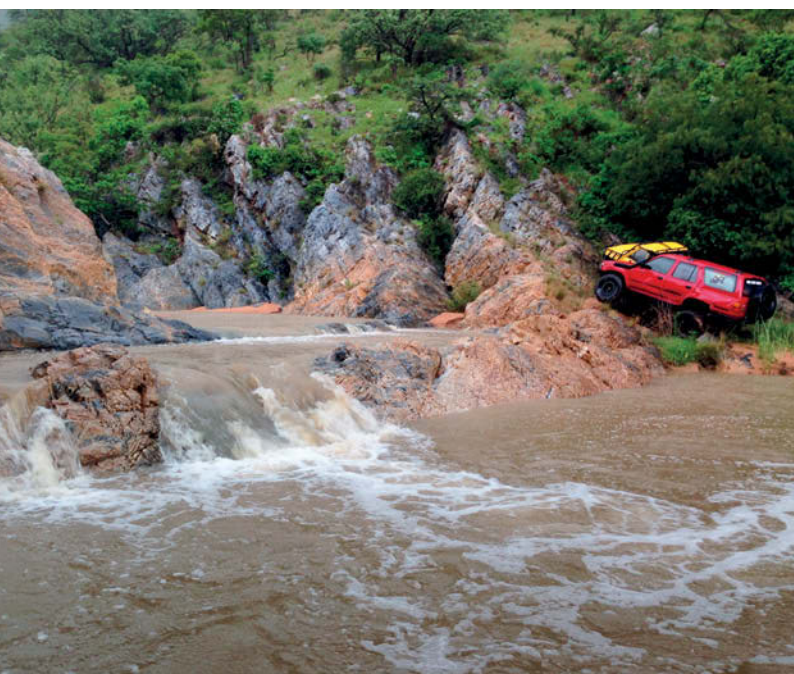
Some 50 metres on, the first hidden rock under the water caused the Hilux to dig in its two left wheels, drowning the ECU computer box hidden in the glove compartment. The engine died instantly, and refused to restart. It sounded like

water had been drawn up into the exhaust, too. We were stuck.

The next step was to go on foot – barefoot, that is – in search of the 4Runner, with all the necessary recovery tools on my back. We walked past the V-gulleys, down Dead Dog Gorge, through the sand, over the rocks and through the thorns, until we found the battered red wreck. The remains of my 4Runner had washed up against a tree some 850 metres downstream from where the flood waters had lifted it. The only items left in the vehicle were a Hi-Lift jack, which had been stored under the rear seats, and a strapped-down emergency repair crate containing a toolbox, gumboots, axle stand, saw, axe and raincoats.



Far left 4Runner and Truggy before the flood. **Left** Our campsite, with the water at a peaceful trickle. **Below left** Vehicles parked high on the opposite bank behind a rock wall as the waters start rising. **Below** Mad flood has already washed away the 4Runner, and is tugging at the back of Truggy.



The National Luna fridge was also still there. It wasn't pretty, but still contained some cold drinks and water, which we could definitely use. The only door that could open was the right rear, so we could get to the Hi-Lift jack. With the jack on Johnny's shoulder, we went back up the 850 metres to see if we could free the Hilux from its watery grave. We first tried to jack up at the front wheel rim, but with Johnny's chin resting on the water, he could barely touch the top edge of the rim – all that suspension flex wasn't helping, now!

Eventually we decided to ratchet the rock rings to the Truggy's exoskeleton roll cage, lifting the tyre up, and then jacking on the exoskeleton pipes at the fender to get the nose out of the water.

Success. After this, she started first time, as Toyotas do, and (after filling the hole under the wheel with sand), we were on our way.

Just 50 metres on, we hit another hidden v-rock under the water – and, as Johnny tried to free the Truggy, the left-front Birfield joint snapped. After some spirited driving in three-wheel-drive, Johnny managed to beach the Truggy so that we could work on it – although at this point we were not sure what the problem was.

We ran the 850 metres to the 4Runner to fetch the tools, and the 850 metres back again. Hi-Lift jack on the rock ring, axle stand under axle; remove wheel, remove free-wheel-hub bolts, outer snap ring, felt-ring bolts and bottom knuckle

bearing bolts; lift off complete hub and calliper assembly, remove broken parts. Then back 850 metres to the 4Runner with jack, axle stand and toolbox to strip out my chromoly 30-spline shafts, and back 850 metres to fit parts.

That done, we were some 50 metres on and trying to scale a big rock, when the other Birfield broke! Cue double 850-metre return trip, with jack, stand and tools in tow: rinse and repeat.

By now we were completely finished. Johnny had full-blown flu, I had a migraine, our water was finished, and we weren't laughing. Just before I delivered the tools to fit the second Birfield, and after ploughing through the bushes and shrubbery far too many times, I was suddenly stopped in my tracks by a



heavenly voice. A ruler's length from my face was an extremely venomous Twig Snake (Vine Snake), staring straight at me. I had been perilously close to walking face-first into a snake – which would possibly have cost me my life.

After that ordeal, I managed to guide Johnny around the rocks that had caused the second Birfield joint to explode, through a deep pool and onto Dead Dog Gorge – where we battled for more than two-and-a-half hours to find the right line through. First we tried the left, where we had guided the Jeeps through on previous trips; but it was too washed out. We then tried a line to the far left, and had almost crested the top before Gert noticed that one front leaf was almost completely inverted... so it was back down again.

Then we got the front diff and propshaft stuck on a v-rock, which we freed only after ratcheting the front wheel to the exoskeleton, lifting the vehicle with a Hi-Lift and pushing it sideways off the rock.

The last resort was a crazy line never tried before; it was either going to work or end in disaster. Even with all its suspension flex, the Hilux's left-back wheel was still about two metres in the air. I asked Gert and Johnny Jnr to hang off the side of the rear cage to add some ballast, and we crawled the Hilux through and out. This was around 18:00 on the day after my 4Runner had washed away, and it was getting dark. Once we'd eventually made it to the 4Runner, we

loaded everything we could get off it onto the Hilux.

The escape road was now not far away, but our fluid supply was long gone and Johnny's tongue was sticking to his palate – we needed to hydrate fast. Johnny Jnr remembered having seen a spring when we'd driven up the river the previous day and – yes! – we found it. It tasted like the cleanest water ever.

At around 19:00, Johnny's brother Rudolf and my chief technician Pieter – who had come looking for us – found us on the exit road. We finally had cellular reception and could let our families know that we were okay.

Pieter opted to drive the Hilux back, while we took the Grand Cherokee used for transporting the vehicles. But, a kilometre down the road, the Truggy's rear differential imploded. Rocks pounding the underside of the diff casing had unscrewed the drain plug, and with no oil, the teeth had all broken off the pinion.

Amazingly enough, the Hilux had lasted just long enough to get us out

And I had learned a few things from this ordeal. Chief among them were: stay out of rivers during the rainy season as flash floods do happen; having people with the correct mind-set is crucial on trips like these; and don't think it will never happen to you.

PART 2: THE RECOVERY

As we were exhausted after the weekend, not much work was done on Monday.

Our concern was how to get the 4Runner out of the river before it rained again, or before the locals found it and hacked it to pieces.

We could either get the vehicle out in one piece, or strip it and carry the parts out. It was difficult finding somebody with a suitably capable single-cab 4x4 at short notice, but a brother in our 4x4 circle, Sean Botha, was happy to chip in – with his trailer, 4x35-inch tyres, and help from his son and daughter.

The other part of our plan of action was to finish fitting the new gearbox into Theo Du Plooy's Formula Toy which we were building. This was going to be the official extraction vehicle because of its dual transfer cases and ultra-low gearing. Technicians Pieter and Mitch finished the job early that evening, and, after testing, all was deemed good-to-go first thing Tuesday morning. With the weather bureau indicating more rain on Thursday, we had to act swiftly.

At 07:30 we all met at the Carnage turn-off and proceeded to the second concrete bridge, where we could leave our two trailers and the standard vehicles. There we loaded the four 35-inch tyres onto our trusty old 2.4D Hilux bakkie and formed a convoy with the Formula Toy and Sean's Grand Cherokee.

The trailer was too wide for the road which followed the river upstream, so our options were to tow my stricken 4Runner out in one piece, or to bring the parts out piece by piece. We were hoping for the



Opposite page The wreck we discovered the next morning, 850 metres downstream.

Above Rescue operation begins by flipping the 4Runner on its roof. **Top right** Using a come-along to set the axles straight. **Right** Winching the 4Runner back on to its new 35-inch wheels. **Below** What was left of the original rim and tyre. **Below right** Unbolting the props to free up the axles for towing, and cutting a portion of the roof away to enable the 4Runner to be driven. The National Luna fridge was battered, but survived the ordeal and was working again soon after.





Formula Toy's extra low gearing made short work of its 2.5-tonne load. **Inset** Wreck loaded up and heading back to the workshop to be given another lease on life.



first option, but, in case of the latter, we drove and then towed the 2.4D Hilux across the river crossings until we got to the steep rocky sections, where we knew we would battle to get the 4x2 bakkie back up again. Here we loaded two tyres onto the roof of the Formula Toy and the other two onto the Grand Cherokee. All in all, it took us a good hour-and-a-half to get to the 4Runner.

Our plan was to winch the capsized 4Runner onto its roof, which was ruined anyway, then repair enough of the suspension damage to enable it to be towed. We winched using the Formula Toy (which was parked on the opposite river bank) and, once the 4Runner was on its back, we could inspect the damage.

The left-front main leaf was broken, with the military wrap second leaf still holding the pack; the right-front leaf pack was bent and the Fox shock shaft bent; the left-rear spring pack was badly bent with shackle inverted; the rear axle housing had been bent despite our monster gusset, and the pumpkin guard was flattened – luckily without damaging the internals.

We removed the rear driveshaft at the diff, loosened the bent Fox shock and pulled the rear axle backwards with a come-along so that we could get the tyre on. At first we couldn't turn the rear wheels, so thought it was too badly bent. We were getting ready to remove the centre portion so that it could still be towed, when Pieter remembered that I had parked the vehicle with the four-wheel line-lock on against the rock, prior to the flood. As the vehicle was on its roof, we couldn't get to the line-lock valve, so Pieter simply cut the rear brake lines and folded them over. Voilà, the rear axle turned perfectly!

Bent and buckled wheels off, we fitted the others; then, winching the vehicle from front and rear, we spun it around on its roof to face the correct direction, before winching it back onto its wheels. The ruined rims and tyres were strapped all over the 4Runner, making it look like something out of a *Mad Max* movie. With Sean and his Jeep out front, I was towing the 4Runner with the Formula Toy – with its double-low 4:70 ratio, and using up to 4th gear, it wasn't even feeling the 2.5-tonne load. The Jeep's

help was needed only on two very steep boulder-strewn sections.

Back at the bridge, we loaded the Formula Toy and 4Runner on to trailers, and got quite a few stares on the way home. Even the traffic cop we passed only cupped his chin in disbelief.

Back at work on Wednesday, after cutting off the roof, I found my wallet and Leatherman lodged under the seat among the mud and debris. The National Luna fridge worked first time; and, a day later, the electronic display as well. Pieter pulled the injectors from the 1KZ-TE engine and drained the sump to get the water out. Each cylinder was liberally sprayed with water-repellent and left overnight. On Thursday morning, the old girl started right up.

The only mechanical damage was to the rear axle housing and the suspension components. The front diff, engine, gearbox, dual transfers, rear diff internals, driveshafts, fuel tanks, steering and chassis were all okay.

My ex-4Runner will get another go at life pretty soon, as a four-seater Formula Toy, but with some very special suspension. Stay tuned. ■



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SPOTTED

SECRETARY BIRD

FANCY NAME
Sagittarius serpentarius

AFRIKAANS
Sekretarisvoël

WORDS & PICTURES
KOOS PIETERS



If you are a true birder at heart, and have a healthy fascination for birds of prey, then Secretary birds are one of the species you can never get too much of. I have lost track of my many visits to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (the figure must be around 30 or so), but I still have very clear memories of most of my encounters with, and observations of, these energetic and persistent hunters.

As they relentlessly stride through the veld, they remind me of committed foot soldiers focused on one mission only – and that is to find the enemy and destroy it on sight. Most other birds of prey sit for hours on a perch, scanning the area and waiting for some form of prey to enter their field of vision. Similarly, most egrets stand for hours, as if they have been cast in stone, waiting and waiting and waiting for an unlucky meal to pass. But not the Secretary birds. They don't have the patience to sit or stand around for hours waiting for food to come their way. They go out to find, hunt, and kill it. With vigour, focus and passion.

Where can I spot this bird?

You can find this easily-recognised bird almost all over southern Africa. No matter how dry the area or how high the rainfall, if there's food around, they could be there. They are often seen briskly walking and hunting in grasslands, savanna, and even semi-desert areas.

What's on the menu?

Folklore has it that Secretary birds eat mainly snakes, but that is not entirely true. They will certainly hunt down and swallow any snake they can overpower and get down their throats, but their main source of food is insects (like grasshoppers), small rodents, lizards, small birds and birds' eggs. In fact, almost anything that they can catch and overpower will be stomped to death by their strong stubby legs and eaten by these energetic hunters.

What's special about this bird?

The Secretary bird is not only fascinating to observe, it is also unique: in the sense that it is regarded as the world's only terrestrial eagle. The hooked bill, display flight and breeding behaviour are all similar to those of eagles. However, it is, in fact, the only species in the family Sagittaridae, and is found only in Africa.

They have the longest tail of all birds in southern Africa; it can grow up to 75cm long. Their legs are long, and clearly made for walking great distances. Like most other birds that hunt on the ground, they have no feathers on their legs, which probably aids their ability to see prey on the ground. They almost always appear in pairs, and they are thought to defend large territories of up to 50 square kilometres in size. However, I have been privileged to see as many as 16 birds gathered at a waterhole, and then watched in amazement as the birds

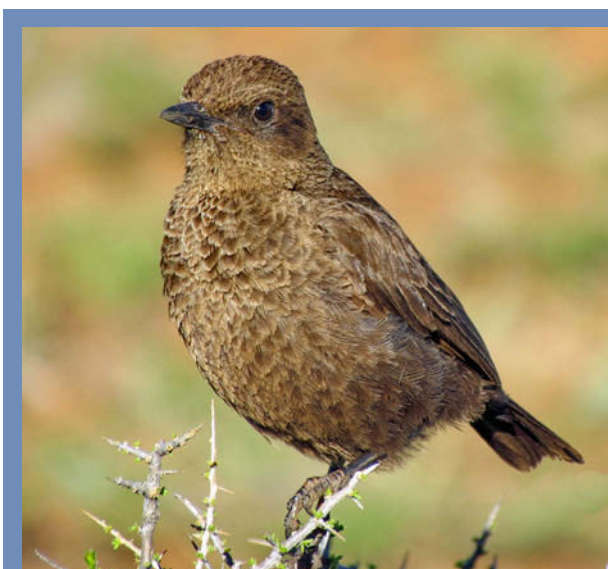
took to the air one after the other in a mesmerising aerial display.

Home is usually a nest on top of a tree, and, although they cover enormous distances, they normally return to the nest at the end of the day. Unlike most other birds of prey, they have short toes and stubby feet which are used to stun and then kill prey with a flurry of kicks.

Their wide gape enables them to swallow fairly large prey. Sometimes food is stored in the crop and brought back to the nest and regurgitated for juveniles. Because of their short toes, they cannot perch on a branch or in a tree; hence their nest is normally made on top of the tree, where they can land more easily.

Because of their sheer size and body weight, in windless conditions they often have to take a short run before take-off in order to increase airflow over the wings to produce lift. This makes for spectacular photographs if you are swift enough with your lens and shutter.

It is thought that their name originated from the Arab name "saqr-et-tair" which means "hunter bird". Next time you lay eyes on one of these magnificent tall birds, spend a while and follow them if the terrain allows you to. You are bound to see them hunting down an insect, a mouse, or even, (with a bit of luck), a snake. But keep your camera ready in action mode, because things happen at lightning speed when these agile hunters discover and attack their prey. ■



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THE THIN GREEN LINE

GAME RANGERS: THE LAST LINE OF DEFENCE

In this new series, Bryan Havemann tells us what it takes to keep conservation initiatives alive, and wild species from extinction

WORDS & PICTURES **BRYAN HAVEMANN**

How many of us have not wished that we had become game rangers instead of sitting behind a desk in the smog-filled city, having to endure a nine-to-five job? There is a romantic notion that a ranger spends all of his time out in the bush in short shorts getting tanned, while bottle-feeding orphaned baby antelopes, wrestling crabby crocodiles and generally (not always...) fending off the advances of gorgeous Swedish blondes smitten with Khaki Fever.

The term “Jack of all trades” best sums up what a ranger’s job entails. But, just to ensure that we maintain gender equality, “Jill of all trades” also rings true, as more and more female rangers enter the conservation arena which was, in the past, strictly the domain of macho male rangers.

Becoming a game ranger is almost a divine calling and cannot be viewed as just a job. It calls for extraordinary commitment and dedication, with not only a willingness to endure hardships and extreme events, but also with the ability to derive a perverse pleasure from dealing with out-of-the-ordinary circumstances. A game ranger is, indeed, a very special breed!

There are various categories of “rangers”, which include field guides, field rangers, marine rangers, section rangers, regional rangers, head rangers, wardens, etc. Most of these require a talent for tracking, and knowledge of animal behaviour, birding, shooting, First-aid, driving a 4x4 vehicle, bushcraft, astronomy ... as well as the two things that rangers fear most: using people skills and doing proper administration.

Studying to become a game ranger can be done through most of the larger academic universities in the major

centres, and at universities of technology, colleges and private companies – including Ecotraining, one of the dedicated organisations focused more on guiding and offering courses of different duration to meet specific requirements. One of the more successful initiatives has been the Southern African Wildlife College based near Orpen gate next to the Kruger National Park, where many rangers from all over Africa have been trained. I was fortunate to be able to study first for a Nature Conservation Diploma and then to do my work-integrated learning in the KNP. Here, I





Akagera Game Reserve rangers on patrol in Rwanda. **Inset** Author Bryan Havemann with captured AK-47.

learn only so much from a textbook, and a game ranger's career epitomises the importance of learning from the bush-world of hard knocks and wild ways. Often the decisions you have to take will profoundly affect your future – or terminate that future if you make the wrong choice. Game rangers who are privileged to work in big-game country will know this only too well.

I would like to give an account of a day in the life of a game ranger that, although excessive, is not an unusual way in which to spend the day...

Wake up at 05:00 and work in the office, answering emails and assessing the patrol data from the day before. Inspect the field rangers' uniforms and rifles and have paramilitary-based marching and drilling practice.

At 07:00, join a radio session in which the head ranger contacts the 22 ranger sections within the KNP to give directives, and to get feedback and

updates from each of them.

After a quick breakfast, deploy all the field rangers in the areas they will patrol for the day. Head out to do veld-condition assessments with some university students.

Get a call mid-morning from one of the bush camps, saying that they have an elephant in the camp. Drive to the camp and eventually succeed in chasing the

“We close in on the position and suddenly hear a sound like angry bees flying over our heads”

elephant out, after having been charged numerous times. Stop and write out a fine for tourists who are outside their vehicle and throwing beer cans at a hippo in the river. Try to remain calm and professional while having to endure excessive abuse from them.

Receive a radio call from one of the field-ranger patrols that have been charged by a very thin adult male lion.

The patrol still has sight of the lion, so I radio the veterinary department, and one veterinarian flies out in the helicopter just before lunchtime and picks me up at my ranger outpost. We fly to the GPS co-ordinates and the field rangers direct us to the spot – where we see the lion break cover. The lion is darted, and tests positive for Bovine Tuberculosis.

Get a frantic call from the house that my dog has killed a large Mozambique Spitting Cobra. I am dropped off there and check the dog for any sign of bite marks. I rinse the dog's swollen eyes out with water and keep it in a dark room for the rest of the day.

Early in the afternoon, the field rangers on the boundary report that they have heard gunshots and are investigating. Race out to the boundary, close to where they heard the gunshots. While in radio contact with the first field ranger patrol group, I and other field rangers close in on the position and suddenly see a movement ahead, and hear a sound like angry bees flying over our heads. A moment later the loud bangs of the gunshots reach our ears and we realise that we have been shot at. Our training kicks in and we do everything instinctively. Within 20 minutes we apprehend the poachers near the carcass



Field rangers fighting fire. **Below** Elephant being herded by a Robinson 44 helicopter.

of a buffalo they had shot earlier and had started butchering. They'd been cutting the meat into manageable chunks to carry out of the park to illegal butcheries: bush meat is big business. All the evidence is gathered up and photos taken, and, after we've taken a comprehensive statement from them, the poachers are transported to the police station, where they are handed over and charged.

On the way back, one of the wilderness-trail camps calls, saying that their camp cook has malaria and needs to get to hospital. I bring in a temporary replacement-cook and head to the hospital. When returning from the hospital, I find a group of local villagers gathered at the park gate, wanting help – one of their cows has been killed by a lion that has left the park. I immediately contact the vet I'd been with earlier, and we set up near the cattle carcass in our vehicle. An hour after dark, two young male lions arrive at the carcass and are both darted and relocated back into the park in the back of my bakkie.

Driving back to my house just before midnight, dodging the nightjars and scrub hares in the headlights, I see a leopard walking in the road; and, not long after, a big white rhino grazing the short grass next to the road.

Eating a cold supper at home, I feel a wet nose press against me and there is my dog; none the worse for wear, but just as tired as I am. This has been a long day, but is way better than an office job in a

city. I try to get some sleep before the next morning's 05:00 wake-up call.

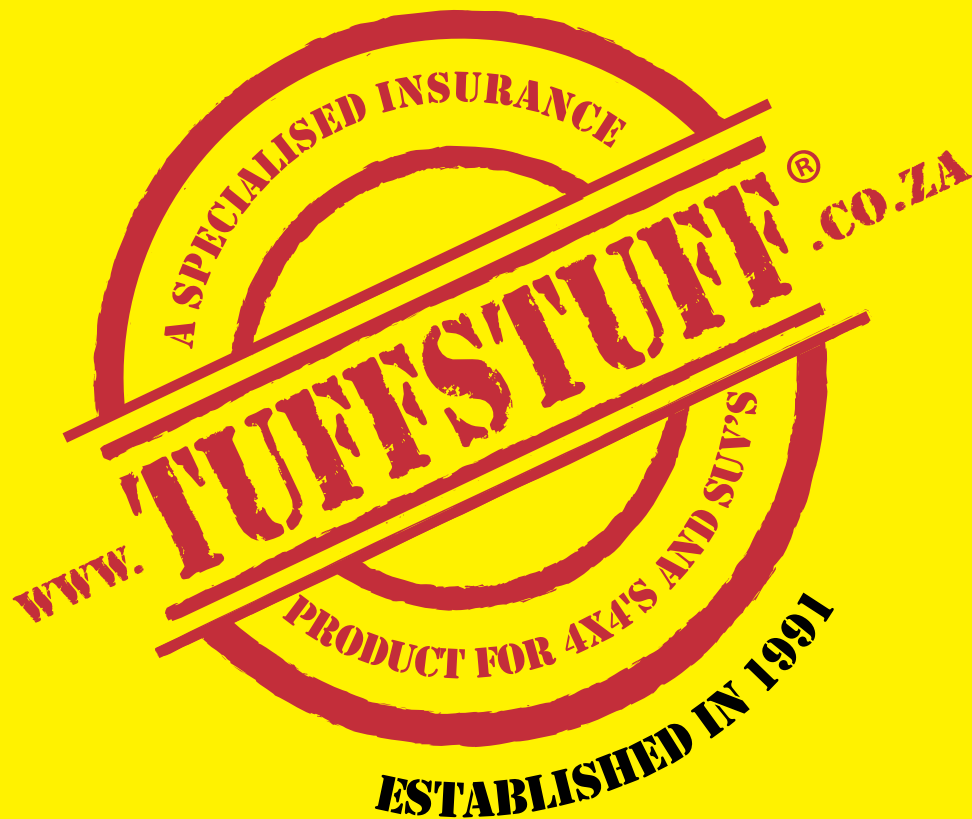
The Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) is an organisation that represents the rangers in Africa. Anyone can join, as there are various categories. Chris Galliers, who is also a world-class photographer, is the chairman. The International Ranger Federation (IRF) has representative organisations all over the world, and the GRAA fulfils this role in Africa. The Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF) was also formed by a passionate Australian game ranger, Sean Wilmore, who raises money for the families and widows of rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Sean is now also the president of the IRF.

The important role that rangers play in protected areas can never be underestimated – especially in Africa, where there is often only a handful of dedicated men and woman rangers who make the difference between sustainable biodiversity conservation and irreparable non-sustainable utilisation of the natural resources.

Spare a thought for this special breed of rangers who will be out tracking rhino poachers or waiting at snare lines while you are safe and sound, sleeping in your warm bed. A large part of what prevents animals crossing the line of no return into extinction is the thin green line of rangers who dedicate their lives to biodiversity conservation. ■



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RAD RIG: KLAUS LUTZELER'S CLASS A BUGGY

WORDS & PICTURES ANDREW MIDDLETON





Above A 40:1 low-range reduction ratio on the transfer box is designed for incredibly slow crawling, like this. Max speed is 60km/h.

Think of a serious Nissan 4x4, and no doubt an image of a dusty and battered Patrol will come to mind. The big GU Patrol has made itself famous by dominating off-road events the world over, and is, indeed, an incredibly capable standard machine. But, what if I told you another Nissan will go further? What if I told you that one of the most capable 4x4s in South Africa is based on a knackered old Nissan Maxima?

A car that's about as interesting as stale bread, the genteel Maxima was designed for reliability and comfort, not for climbing up sheer rock faces. Yet, for the innovative Klaus Lutzeler, the hidden gem was obvious. You see, 'Flat Foot', as Klaus's home-built Class A beast was to become known, is a true example of how necessity is the mother of invention.

Once a regular on the 4x4 Challenge circuit in his Class A Hilux, with his

daughter as co-driver, Klaus was stranded when she left the country for greener pastures. With nobody to operate the pneumatic suspension and turning brakes, and no alternative co-pilot to be found, Klaus was forced to build a new vehicle to compete in – something he could drive alone.

So it was that, in 2009, he bought a 20-year-old Maxima for the princely sum of R19 000. With 290 000km on the crusty odometer, the 3.0-litre V6 beast would soon be transformed. All the parts were stripped and the engine pillaged from its mountings. The old Maxima shell and all its ancillaries could then be sold off as parts – almost covering the cost of the car's initial purchase.

The front-wheel-drive nature of the Maxima was its main attribute, and the reason why Klaus saw such potential. Mounted sideways next to the driver, the side shafts protruding from each

side of the engine would travel down the length of the chassis, essentially becoming propshafts. The internal diff was welded up too, which meant a constant 50/50 torque lock front to rear. With the standard four-speed automatic box mated to a 20:1 reduction ratio, the powertrain was coming to life.

Of course, power is nothing without control, and an appropriate frame had to be constructed. Klaus, who is a design engineer by trade, had no problem drawing up a blueprint of the frame; and he began building it in his workshop from the ground up, using tubular steel and parts scavenged from various vehicles. By scavenged parts, I mean that everything on his 4x4 has been rescued from destruction or total disrepair. There are few new parts, and this helped bring the total cost of the build down dramatically to less than R100 000 – a cost which includes that



Top left Hydraulic arms control the direction of the rear wheels.

Top right With external bead lockers fitted, these 12-year-old Goodyear MTR tyres run safely at pressures as low as 0.2 bar. **Right** The free-wheeling hubs come from a Hilux front axle, although the axles themselves are from a Hilux rear. **Left** The airbags come from a 20-tonne truck and make light work of lifting the 750kg buggy.

Below left Four-wheel steering and a powerful V6 engine result in epic doughnuts. **Below right** A joystick controls the airbags while the left and middle pedal control their respective brakes. The throttle on the right is linked to a Nissan Maxima V6 with a four-speed auto.





Above Two airbags on each axle are adjustable by up to half a metre each. **Left** Klaus uses his Class A beast 'Flat Foot' for extreme events and messing around his farm.

of the 45 000km travelled by going from event to event.

For the four-wheel steering system – vital in a Class A competition vehicle – a couple of Eighties-era Hiluxes were stripped of their Birfield joints and recirculating ball steering systems. The Birfields were connected to a pair of somewhat stronger Hilux rear axles and fitted with hydraulic rams to turn the wheels. The rear wheels are controlled by a joystick in the cab while the fronts are connected to a conventional steering wheel. Both axles have ARB air lockers and custom-made sideshafts.

Many aspects of Klaus's buggy confuse and dazzle the eye, from the

position of its engine, to its ability to drive sideways like a crab, but one aspect above all others makes it truly unique. It all started in 1985, when Klaus met an engineer that worked on buses – in particular the air-ride systems that lower them for ease of access. After meeting this man, Klaus was sure he could improve the air ride systems of the day and implement them on 4x4s, making them near-unstoppable.

Klaus, of course, wouldn't be caught buying new bits, and instead scavenged some more parts for his air-ride system – this time from a 20-tonne truck. The four bags (one for each wheel) are individually controlled from the dashboard, and pumped by two large compressors. Changing the angle in which his rig approaches an obstacle changes the weight distribution, thus

more effectively providing traction to the wheels in need. For example, when Klaus is driving on a side slope, he pumps the air bags on the low side and releases pressure on the bags on the high side of the slope, levelling his vehicle and making it less likely to tip. When going down a slope, the rear can be lowered and the front raised, effectively levelling the terrain.

Together with a light weight of around 750kg, an under-stressed V6 engine, 35-inch tyres and the crazy air ride, the rig Klaus has built is phenomenally capable. It is able to drive up vertical rocks over 2m high with ease. Today, the rig is used for local and national events and for messing around on the farm Klaus owns. Unfortunately, competition is predictably scarce. ■

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HEAD FOR THE HILLS

TRAIL REVIEW: HOLNEK, MPUMALANGA

WORDS & PICTURES GRANT SPOLANDER





Our Holnek adventure kicked off in darkness. It was one of those moonless nights, when the Milky Way splashes across the night sky and pools behind an infinitely dark horizon.

We left Pretoria later than planned, arriving at Holnek's entrance gate somewhere around 21:00. Just as our headlights pierced the wire fence, trail owners Kobus and Manda came out to greet us.

We followed Kobus's Cruiser in a cloud of swirling dust to our accommodation for the weekend: a well-equipped thatched home, with two wooden decks that presumably allowed one to gaze out at something which was, as yet, in darkness.

Our three-hour drive from Gauteng had brought us to the heart of Mpumalanga, but, having done the journey at night, we had no idea what our surroundings looked like. It was an unnerving feeling, and although our chalet glowed with incandescent warmth, I felt like a lost fish – circling an alluring light in the inky depths of an ocean.

The next morning, I woke to Gary's call: "Grant, open your curtains. You gotta check this view."

The two wooden decks, previously cloaked in darkness, were now presenting one of the best holiday-home views I've ever enjoyed. For as far as the eye could see, rolling grass hills spilled into a valley of peppermint-crisp trees and chocolate-coloured rock. Everything was eerily silent, and the scene utterly mesmerising.

I unthinkingly dragged a chair across the wooden deck. The faint sound

“ Fifteen minutes into the trail, Holnek had already secured its place in my Top Five list ”

travelled hundreds of metres to the top of a mountain slope, where two giant eland stood silhouetted against the morning sky. Their instantly recognisable heads turned towards the foreign sound before they leapt off to quieter environs.

The excitement and delight that we'd felt in Holnek's surprise unveiling proved to be a recurring theme for the rest of our trip.

Kobus had offered, and arranged, to show us the farm's 2 000-hectare expanse. Soon after leaving the chalet, we were descending one of the farm's countless valley slopes, and hearing tall, soft grass brush against the side of our Hiluxes as we crossed a small ravine. However, within five minutes of starting the trail, a two-stage boulder ascent was spiking our low-range adrenaline levels.

Our Arctic Truck Hilux grabbed at the coarse surface, the 35-inch tyres doing their utmost to hook up the vehicle's tow-bar. Just as the rock showed signs of levelling out, a second boulder – plonked on top of the first – required an even more carefully chosen line. A small step off the back of the obstacle saw us dropping into a wide-open plain that swept towards a tall ridge – which overlooked more spectacular views. We were only 15 minutes into the trail, but in that short space of time Holnek had already secured its place in my Top Five list of 4x4 trails.

We stopped at one of the trail's many picture-perfect viewpoints, and I seized the chance and sprang from the Hilux to compliment Kobus on his beautiful trail. He grinned, and replied, "You ain't seen nothing yet."



Opposite page The trail's blessed with countless spectacular viewpoints. **This page, left** Expect plenty of valleys and fountain streams. **Below** A few of the rocky obstacles may require diff-lock or some form of traction control.





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Although I'd heard this cliché many times before, this was the first time that it hadn't left me feeling sceptical – although I battled to imagine Holnek getting any more spectacular than the scenes we'd already experienced. But, remarkably, it did.

Holnek boasts two 4x4 trails: one long, and one short. In total, you can expect about 20km of phenomenal off-road track. The trail is unguided and open only to guests staying in one of the farm's many accommodation offerings. In other words, day visitors are not permitted on the route, so its exclusivity remains intact.

The terrain is mostly compacted earth, *tweespoor* tracks, occasional mud, and plenty of rock – but not the kind that dents your 4x4's undercarriage or punctures a sidewall, as almost all the rock here is of the massive-boulder variety. The greatest test of your vehicle will be its approach, ramp and departure angles... and, of course, traction.

The trail follows the contours of the land's countless creeks, valleys and hidden nooks; in fact, shortly after descending a brief forest section, we drove past the trail's most popular campsite. This is a pre-erected site with three isolated canvas tents, each equipped with white-linen beds and a near-luxury en-suite bathroom.

I kept shaking my head in disbelief, unable to accept that I'd never heard of this 10-year old trail before. In fact, it was by pure luck



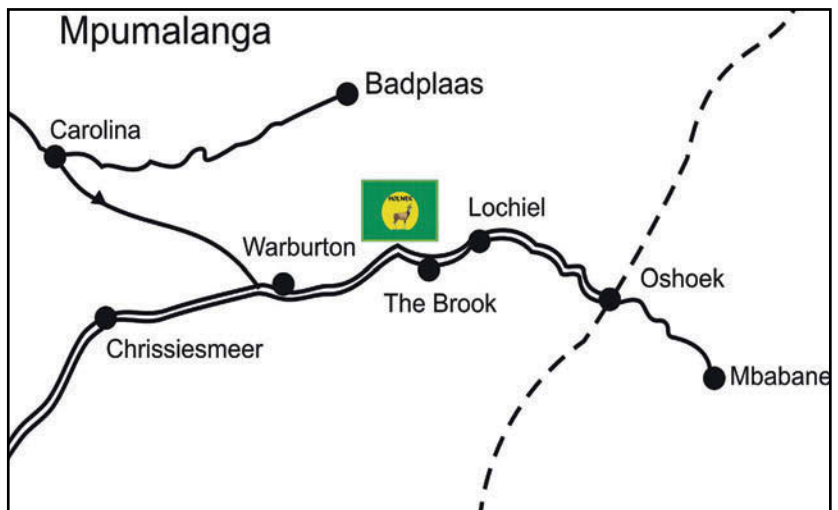
that a local resident in Ermelo had suggested Holnek to us when we were hunting around for new 4x4 routes.

Just when you think Holnek's scenery can't possibly get any more majestic, you start to crisscross its many mountain streams – tinkling with delicious sweet water that glistens like crystal glass. But the streams are just an indication of what's to come: the farm's two unforgettable waterfalls that cascade all year long.

The trail keeps outdoing itself with every turn and valley you enter. In many ways it's an exhausting experience; an overstimulation of the senses.

We cross one last splendid plain before our Holnek journey comes to an end; and, at the same time, we're suddenly surrounded by antelope – hundreds of them galloping over a hilltop. I shake my head in disbelief one last time, and, as I do, a nagging thought creeps into my mind: "How many Holneks are out there still? Epic trails that no-one knows of or, perhaps, that people prefer to keep hush-hush?"

But, no matter. Half the fun will be tracking them down. ■



Opposite page The farm boasts a picturesque dam with good bass fishing. **Top left** Many of the obstacles at Holnek are optional and can be bypassed. **Right** There are two magnificent waterfalls on the farm. Be sure to hike to their summits.

TRAIL INFO

PROVINCE

Mpumalanga

NEAREST TOWN

Carolina (38km)

NEAREST FUEL STOP

Carolina

TRAIL DETAILS

Terrain

Rock, sand — and short stretches of mud, depending on the time of the year.

Distance

20km

Guided/Unguided

Unguided

Open/Closed

Open all-year round; booking essential.

Will I get lost?

No, you'll receive a map.

Difficulty

3, but optional 4s are available.

Could be 5, after heavy rain.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

Low-range

Yes

Diff-lock

Necessary for certain sections, but these

can be avoided.

Minimum ground clearance

220mm

Tyres

Preferably ATs or MTs.

Recovery points

Not necessary, but advised

Underbody protection

Not necessary, but advised.

Soft-roader friendly

No

What vehicle were we using?

An Arctic Truck Hilux with 35-inch tyres.

PRECAUTIONS

Malaria

No

Heights

Yes, but nothing drastic.

BRING YOUR...

Food and supplies

Yes

Firewood

Yes

Swimming costumes

Yes; there's a dam and a swimming pool.

Quad bike

No

Awning

The farm has limited shade, so if you'd like to stop regularly for a food/drink break, you'd want to fit your awning.

COSTS

Trail

Free when booked with accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION

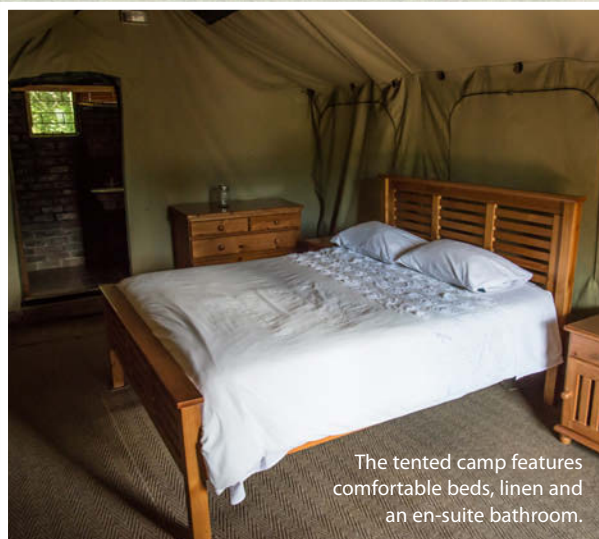
Holnek has no shortage of accommodation. You can camp with your own gear, stay in a pre-erected tent, bunk in a chalet, or lord it in a large A-frame house. Prices vary, so check out the website for details: www.holnek.co.za

CONTACT

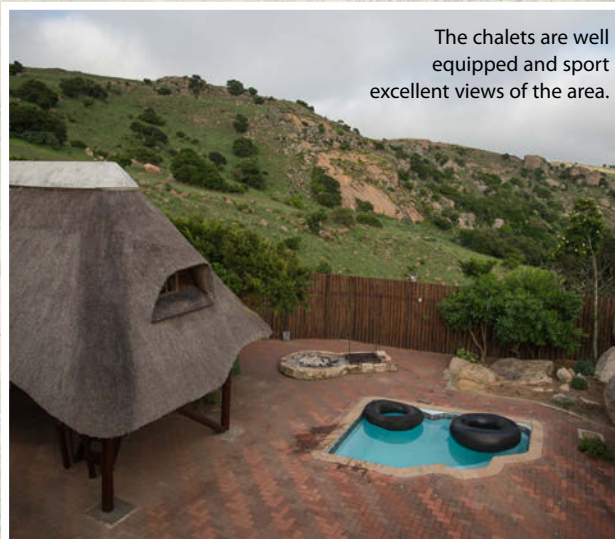
Manda on 082 807 1054, or Linda on 082 929 5410, or Jan on 082 492 4049

GPS CO-ORDINATES

S26° 12.485 E30° 30.474

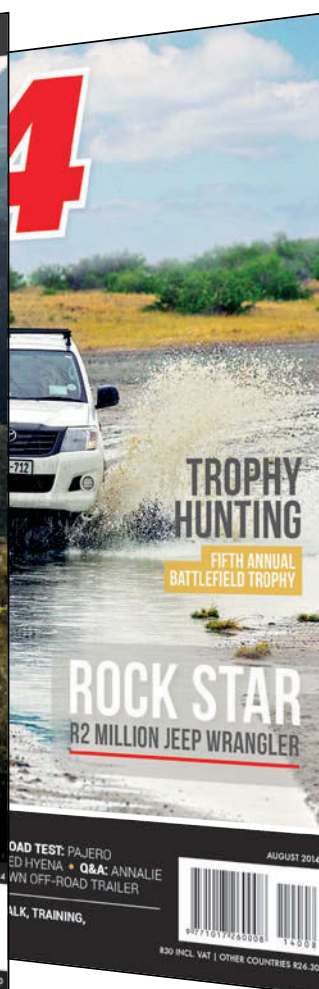
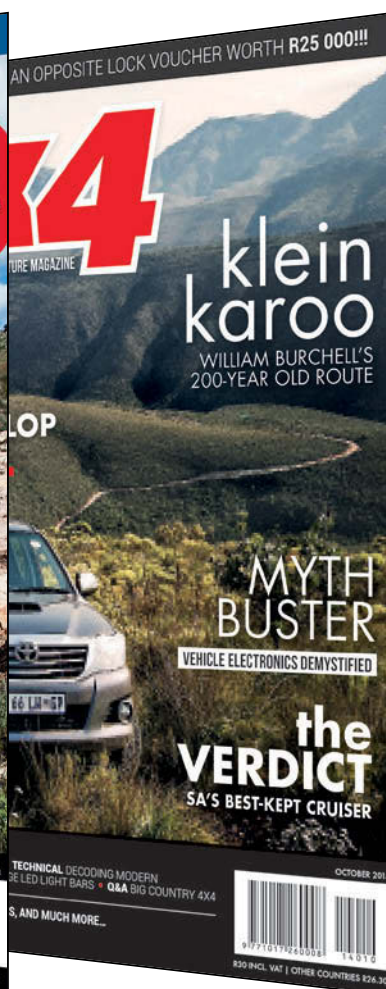
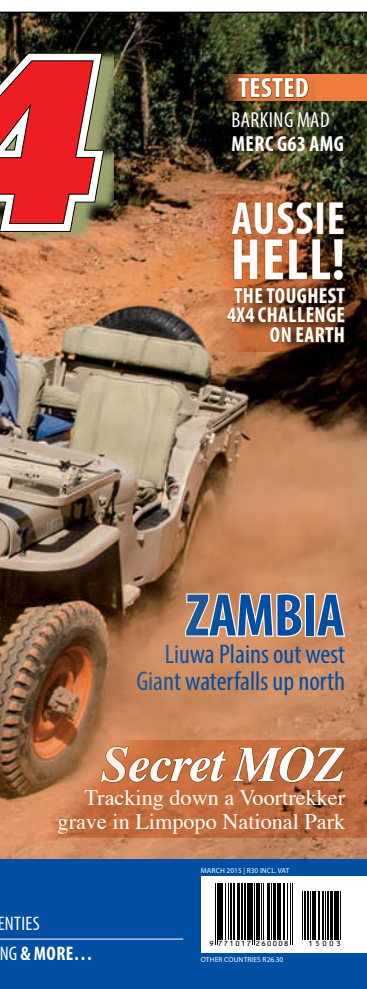


The tented camp features comfortable beds, linen and an en-suite bathroom.



The chalets are well equipped and sport excellent views of the area.





One lucky subscriber stands a chance to win a National Luna 55-litre fridge + power pack worth a total of R13 200!



**National Luna
55L – Single Bin
Fridge
WORTH
R10 250**



**National Luna
Portable
Power Pack *
WORTH
R2 950**

* Battery not included in power pack



TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. The competition closes on 30 June 2015. Both new and existing subscribers are eligible for entry. Offer is limited to subscribers in South Africa only, and the prize must be collected from a fitment centre in one of the major cities. The winner will be selected at random and notified by email. The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

LEXUS NX 200T EX

PRICE R579 900

0-100km/h 7.1 seconds

Towing capacity 1500kg

Fuel consumption 7.9l/100km (claimed)
10.5l/100km (tested)



PREMIUM URBAN WARRIOR

The new Lexus NX is a radically-styled softroader aimed directly at competitors such as the Audi Q5, BMW X3, Merc GLA and the pricier Range Rover Evoque. Concept car styling, upmarket interior and fine driving dynamics make a good first impression, but what's it like to live with?

Subjective as styling is, some shapes are more successful than others, but attention to detail on this Lexus has worked brilliantly. Angular lines and 'L'-shaped LED running lights that also act as indicators are striking, as are the tail lights and aggressive stance. The shark-like design is meant to attract younger buyers to a brand that is typically represented by octogenarians, and it seems to have worked – I know I'm sold.

An interior apparently inspired by the LFA supercar reeks of quality. Injection moulded leather seats are the

best in the business, while the dash and infotainment screen are fluidly integrated. Interestingly, Lexus has ditched its old mouse-like screen controller in favour of a track pad. The leather hand rest makes it easy to use when stationary, but, when you are driving, your finger moves about over bumps, causing you to select and click on unwanted icons.

A 2.0-litre turbo petrol four outputs 175kW and delivers impressive open-road fuel economy, coupled as it is with a very precise six-speed auto. Urban driving economy is assisted by a superbly calibrated stop-start system which kills the engine at rest and restarts when your foot is lifted off the brake, helped by a dash display taking the measure of your fuel-saving efforts.

On the open road, the Lexus offers hot hatchback performance in any of its three driving modes, and, though tall, performs fast turns with minimal body

roll. Thrash-worthy as it is, the Lexus really majors on comfort. It's so silent around town that one wonders why a hybrid warrants the extra cost.

Loosely based on the Toyota RAV4 (although sharing only 10% of its parts), the Lexus NX is never going to be a rock-conquering beast, despite its centre diff lock and 190mm of clearance – decent for a softroader.

On loose gravel roads it is stable, the ride is plush and the traction-control system keeps everything in shape. Black plastic coverings on the lower body panels impart the rugged crossover look and also ward off stone chips.

Overall, the Lexus NX represents good value in its segment, scoring high for both its visually arresting sheet metal, and the spacious interior with a quality fit and finish usually reserved for super luxury vehicles. A credible alternative to the German staples. ■



Above Lexus NX is loosely based on the RAV4. Stitched leather and injection moulded seats all part of the difference.

MITSUBISHI ASX 2.0 GLS



Spoiler alert. Mitsubishi's ASX is available only as a front-driver in South Africa. But don't damn it just yet. Its crossover genes include a raised ride height, command driver's view, lots of interior space and a generous 442-litre boot with easy access.

The hardware is a little dated: a naturally aspirated, fuel-injected 2.0-litre petrol with 110kW and 197Nm, both peaks achieved with little fanfare at high-ish revs, and a five-speed manual, albeit a smooth-shifting one. Expect some catching up with the rivals here soon. A 2015 update has focused on pimping the CVT-equipped six-step version to lower fuel consumption to a theoretical 7.4l/100km. The manual GLS spec we

tested offers a claimed 7.5l/100km; we achieved an average of 8.5-9.0.

The underpinnings (shared with the Mitsubishi Lancer and Outlander, Peugeot 4008 and Citroën C4 Aircross) are decent: McPherson struts up front, a multi-link set-up in the rear, calibrated for compliance in the urban commute and on the odd gravel road. It absorbs bumps and bangs effortlessly, but a high centre of gravity makes it lean-prone when chucked into the bends or barrelled full-bore along curves. But the target market will never do that. Sensible speeds are the perfect match for the light steering, tight turning circle and rewarding easy-driving it does offer.

Smaller drivers enjoy the cossetting, easily adjusted seats; most others will

also appreciate the quality leather interior (in the case of the GLS), and the good Rockford Fosgate sound system (add R10 000). A panoramic sunroof upwards from mid-range GLX spec has a sensible screen to avoid one's head being crisped on hot days. The interior has been spruced up, with a new centre console design and touchscreen interface for 'infotainment'. It's clean, practical, roomy and easy to live with.

Specification is high, with cruise control, parking sensors and multi-function wheel from base GL grade, while the 2015 light refresh means new 17-inch alloy wheels, roof rails, LED daytime running lights and snazzier foglight surrounds. A five-star NCAP rating, along with ABS brakes and seven airbags, emphasises the family bias of the ASX. It's a fine contender in the urban crossover mould with a lot to pitch against the rivals. ■

MODEL PRICING

ASX 2.0 GL R299 900

ASX 2.0 GLX R329 900

ASX 2.0 GLS R342 900
(+Rockford Fosgate)

ASX 2.0 GLS CVT R354 900

ASX 2.0 GLS CVT R364 900
(+Rockford Fosgate)

WORDS & PICTURES **ANDREW MIDDLETON**

CLONE WARS

TWIN TEST: **FORD RANGER XL-PLUS DC 2.2** vs **JMC VIGUS DC2.4 SLX**





Why would someone decide to buy a Chinese bakkie? Would it be for reliability? Performance? Sex appeal...?

None of the above. A Chinese bakkie is bought for the sole reason that it's cheap. Although models from the east are indeed improving at a steady rate, the value proposition is still a deciding factor in the purchase of a Chinese product; and, at R355 990, the Vigus is fast approaching mainstream prices. We pitted JMC's best offering against a R391 900 Ford Ranger XL-Plus for a war on home turf.

Best known for copying old Isuzu frames and filling them with basic Mitsubishi engines, the Chinese manufacturers have, on the whole, taken plenty of rap recently – despite steadily improving their products on all fronts. The hordes of rats and mice Chinese manufacturers that were initially imported to SA have settled to three strong contenders in the light commercial sector – GWL, Foton, and, more recently, JMC. The initial Chinese offerings suffered build-quality and reliability issues, and were sent packing after scolding media and customer reviews.

The JMC Vigus we have here has been on sale for about a year, and has (so far) sold just fewer than 300 units through JMC's network of 23 dealers nationwide. Small fry, compared to a tally of almost 30 000 Ford Rangers and over 37 000 Toyota Hiluxes in 2014.

The Vigus 2.4 SLX double-cab is no longer an el-cheapo bakkie, and stands proudly at the very top of JMC's range. Thanks to their affiliation with Ford, JMC has based their new Vigus on the Ranger T6 platform, using the old 88kW/290Nm Ford Puma 2.4 engine and a Getrag driveline as hard parts, so it should perform well – in theory, at least.

We pitted it against a ballpark-price rival, the Ranger XL-Plus. This is a tough mine-spec version of the T6 Ford, shorn of some interior trimmings and external chrome, and stickered at R391 900 – that's just R36 000 more than the Vigus. Powered by the 115kW/375Nm 2.2-litre Duratorq TDCi hi-power engine, and driving through a six-speed manual transmission, its workhorse remit is evidenced by 17-inch steel wheels shod with all-terrain tyres, an optional (R18 000) bull bar, a full-length steel rear bumper and a double battery in the load bin.

24 D



OFF-ROAD DNA

Chassis type.....	Ladder frame
Suspension (F).....	Independent, coil
Suspension (R).....	Solid axle, leaf spring
Turning circle.....	13.4m
Tyres.....	265/70 R16
4WD type.....	Selectable

CLEARANCES

Approach angle.....	29°
Departure angle.....	26°
Ramp angle.....	18°
Ground clearance.....	225mm
Wading depth.....	N/A



By tackling over 1200km of corrugated gravel, 4x4 trails and open tarmac, we aimed to fully explore any weaknesses or strengths of our test units. The route took us up to the north-east side of the Tankwa Karoo and over its wide-open gravel highways. We then took a left, going west on narrow gravel tracks toward the Cederberg through the desolate AfrikaBurn moonscape, and toward the Cederberg's slow rocky trails via the Biedouw Valley. Some more hardcore 4x4 routes were found along the way before we bush-camped near the tiny village of Eselbank.

Each bakkie was loaded with the typical gear for a two-day camping trip and was subjected to the wide variety of terrain in which working bakkies are expected to perform. On the weakness and strength side, we had some surprises, but – keeping long-term value in mind – we had a clear outcome.

INTERIOR

While both bakkies share similar chassis architecture, the interiors are worlds

apart. JMC have delivered far more kit than Ford's base-spec XL-Plus. The JMC's leather seats are fantastically comfortable (although not height-adjustable) and there is plenty of space in the back, too. Even a full-sized man won't be troubled by a 'sit-behind-self' test; but then, the Ford has ample space, too. In fact, Rangers are renowned for their generous cabins.

If gadgets are your thing, the Vigus has you covered – with a 6.5-inch information/entertainment touch-screen, AUX/USB input, and rear parking sensors. But, sadly, it does not have the simple necessity of a trip-mileage readout. Apart from this oversight, JMC have crammed the Vigus with convenience- and comfort tech, so it's a pity that, as with many Chinese products, the ergonomics are not optimal, and some of the minor mouldings feel like they were picked up at a R5 store – from right next to the cell-phone covers and leather jackets.

I didn't trust the JMC's rear parking sensor, as it sometimes failed to sound;

2.2i SPEED



the touchscreen is too dark to be legible during the day (unless parked in shade) and the sound system was tinny and distorted. Another example of cost-cutting is the pathetic windscreen washers that spit like geriatric cobras. By contrast, the Ford's windscreen was hosed clean by a potent multi-nozzle blast.

Although luxuries have been deleted from the Ranger XL-Plus, and it does without a big touch-screen or comfy leather pews, some practical appointments include tough canvas covers on all the chairs. These can be removed and washed, as can the rubber floor mats – all sensible, if mud and dust is the order of the day. The Vigus is not sold with either mats or carpets; instead, your shoes rest on well-padded but not particularly tough rubber flooring that helps cut NVH levels, but creases and folds like a bulldog's face.

Though I'm not the biggest fan of Ford's complicated dashboard, the Ranger interior wins hands down. The quality of materials, instrumentation and plastics are superior all round; and,

despite the absence of fancy gadgets, there are plenty of useful design touches – like an effective holder for a two-way radio between the front cup-holders, and generous nooks for daily clutter. Overall, the Ranger interior seems more likely to stand up to the test of time.

EXTERIOR

Better known for designing true thoroughbreds such as Lamborghinis and Maseratis, Marc Deschamps has now added the JMC Vigus to his portfolio. The mix of Italian and Chinese is an odd combination, to say the least; and, while the Vigus certainly isn't ugly, neither is it particularly distinctive. Its side profile parallels that of the Ford, although the front view has certain Isuzu traits. Ford's T6 Ranger, on the other hand, has always been a handsome brute; made to look more rugged by its steel rims and optional bull bar.

But then, these vehicles are built to work, so styling shouldn't be a top priority. What is a top priority, though, is load-ability. Although the Ranger's

OFF-ROAD DNA

Chassis type.....	Ladder frame
Suspension (F).....	Independent, coil
Suspension (R).....	Solid axle, leaf spring
Turning circle.....	12.7m
Tyres.....	255/70 R16C
4WD type	Selectable

CLEARANCES (standard bumper)

Approach angle.....	25.5°
Departure angle.....	21.8°
Ramp angle.....	18.5°
Ground clearance.....	237mm
Wading depth.....	800mm





Both bakkies handle the corrugations, though the Ford is more stable and feels like it will weather sustained abuse for longer.

load bin is larger (74mm longer, 85mm wider and 11mm higher), its second battery takes up vital space at the rear right side, obstructing the placement of wide items, and potentially attracting the notice of any thieves who have a few selected hand tools, or a jimmy bar. It's a useful piece of kit, though, linked to a strengthened wiring harness, and capable of powering all the added lights, winches and other electrical paraphernalia used by overlanders.

Both bakkies come with a double-layered load bay that incorporates sturdy hooks on the outside for bungee cords or straps, and interior cinching points. Viewed subjectively, the Ford's is more rigidised and appears to be made from thicker gauge steel; and the same goes for the tailgate. Unfortunately for the Vigus, vibrations caused the tailgate

catch to jam, making it impossible to open, after just 200km of gravel road. After another 400km of gravel road, the catch miraculously fixed itself, but there was no getting away from the tailgate's unsheathed interior wires and tinny build-quality.

Where the Ranger really dominates on paper, is in load capacity – the stated 1092kg is almost 300kg above that of the Vigus, and 242kg more than an equivalent Hilux. Towing capacities are similar. It's in the detail-design touches that the Ford emerges as the superior vehicle: for example, jerry cans fit perfectly under the lip of the load bay behind the cab, meaning that they can be stored side by side. This, combined with its larger fuel tank and modest consumption, means higher potential mileage between each fill-up.

ON ROAD

On-road, both bakkies handle similarly, thanks to near-identical chassis and similar weights. The Ford feels slightly more planted, though, despite using all-terrain tyres as opposed to the highway terrains fitted to the Vigus. More noticeable, however, is the Ford's quicker revving and more-willing 2.2-litre turbodiesel, mated to a six-speed transmission with a weighty (but slightly gristly) action. This was a low-mileage unit, and should loosen up; but the H-pattern could do with a bigger physical gap between the third/fourth and the fifth/sixth gears. The Vigus also has a Ford engine, albeit an older and less powerful 2.4-litre TDCi with a 27kW/95Nm disadvantage. This Puma mill is well-known in the Ford stable in various states of tune, as used

LIKES

- Tractable engine, despite low power output
- Comfortable and stable even on the worst gravel roads
- Low NVH levels and comfortable long-distance cruiser
- Auxiliary and USB input for music
- Plenty of rear legroom
- Comfortable seats

DISLIKES

- Bad vibrations in 4H at 90km/h – it feels like the front propshaft is not balanced properly
- Judder when pulling away in 1st gear
- SVS (engine damage light) came on and later disappeared
- Gearbox refused to engage reverse on one occasion and made grinding sounds
- Info screen illegible in sunlight, poor sound system
- No rear diff-lock or limited-slip rear diff

LIKES

- Powerful, rev-happy engine
 - Hill-start assist
 - Quality interior
- Stable on gravel at speed
- Slick six-speed gearbox
 - All-terrain tyres
- Dual battery system
 - Bull bar

DISLIKES

- Turbo lag
- Lack of AUX/USB inputs for music
- Placing of second battery in the loadbay impedes loading capability





in the Transit since 2000, and the Defender more recently. The JMC's torquey engine pulls well from the off, initially with a more tractable feel than the Ranger offers, but it simply doesn't have enough top-end grunt to keep up with the Ford on long hills. A more worrying trait on our Vigus test unit (with less than 5000km on the odo) was a juddering feel through the driveline on pull-away in first gear. Also noteworthy was that, on one occasion, the Getrag-sourced gearbox refused to engage reverse after being parked overnight, and I had to push the vehicle back a couple of metres. Luckily, I was on level ground, and the problem disappeared after I'd driven forwards for a while... Very strange.

At highway speed, both the Ranger and Vigus are comfortable companions, offering similarly low NVH levels

despite the Vigus' lacking a sixth ratio. Ford's more closely-spaced gearbox ratios means that revs are slightly lower at highway speeds, benefiting fuel economy on long trips. In terms of passive safety equipment, the Ford has airbags for both the driver and passenger, with the XL-Plus variant adding side-impact, curtain, and a driver's-side knee airbag. Along with the stability program and ABS/EBD brakes, the Ford Ranger gets a 5-star safety rating – SA's first bakkie to achieve this. In the Vigus, both you and your front passenger get an airbag, and will benefit from ABS and EBD; although stability control is not available at all.

OFF ROAD

Like two bullies in a playground, both bakkies aspire to be the toughest

vehicles out there; at least that's what the press releases suggest. The ride comfort in both, like the drive on road, is comparable. Even at pace on seriously corrugated roads, the Vigus remains confidence-inspiring, despite a gentle wallow from the front end. One concern, on the unit that we drove, was a driveline humming and vibration in high-range 4WD at 90km/h. This was so much so, that we chose (in some instances) to remain in 2H. In the Ford, the suspension and chassis coped marginally better with bumps than did the Vigus, with less wallow or drift – and even with the traction control turned off. Big bumps and potholes are also dealt with more silently in the Ford, which has a solid feeling of engineering integrity; the Vigus offers a mild jolt to cabin occupants – through the dash, the steering and the seat of the pants.



When the going gets really tough, Ford's Ranger usually has middling off-road performance. Its wheel articulation is average for a double-cab bakkie, scoring a 398 on our RTI (Ramp Travel Index), on par with the Isuzu KB, but some way ahead of the 387 achieved by the Vigus. However, the Ford (when fitted with the standard bumper) is at a disadvantage compared to the Vigus in terms of approach and departure angles. The raised bull bar on our test vehicle changed that somewhat.

Apart from the superior tyres on the Ford, which offered more traction in a range of terrain, its 95Nm torque advantage over the Vigus meant that in deep sand, where the JMC was screaming like a terrified schoolgirl, the Ford was able to push through with less drama: going further and faster with less effort. The integrity

of the Vigus suspension was also put into question when the steering wheel was knocked off-centre when going through a large pothole, which the Ford took in its stride. In more extreme terrain, the Ford's rear diff-lock offers a distinct step-up in ability compared to the Vigus, which lacks a diff-lock, or even a limited-slip diff. It tended to falter in cross-axle situations, ending up desperately spinning its wheels in the air.

CONCLUSION

After two days of giving these two contenders from opposite ends of the pool a good thrashing, one clearly stood out as the winner; and I'm afraid it was not the Vigus. The Ford not only carries a bigger load easily, travels faster in more comfort, drinks less fuel and has a longer fuel range, but is also a product

I can trust. The Vigus was comfortable, tractable and game enough in a variety of conditions, but felt a lot softer than the Ford, and more like a work in progress. Apart from this, it suffered a range of on-off mechanical maladies, including displaying an engine warning-light (SVS – symbolising engine damage) in the middle of the Karoo.

This test clearly highlighted some shortfalls that a short drive around the block couldn't tell you. However, this was only a 1200km trip. If a vehicle displays so many issues in such a short amount of time, I'm afraid it's not cut out for harsh South African use. JMC may be getting closer and closer to building a product that equals mainstream rivals like the Ranger, but – until they prove themselves in the long run – don't kid yourself. Spend the R36 000 extra, and get the Ford. ■

TEST DATA

R391 900 + R18 000 bull bar
Odometer 5000km

Engine

Cylinders/Capacity..... 4/2198cc
 Valves.....16
 Bore and stroke..... 86x94.6mm
 Compression ratio..... 15.7:1
 Fuel supply.....Common-rail diesel
 Fuel.....Diesel (suitable for 500ppm)
 Max power.....110kW @ 3700rpm
 Max torque..... 375Nm @ 1500rpm

Transmission

Shift type..... Manual
 First gear..... 5.441
 Second gear..... 2.839
 Third gear..... 1.721
 Fourth gear..... 1.223
 Fifth gear..... 1.000
 Sixth gear..... 0.974
 Final drive..... 3.31
 Reverse..... 4.935
 Low range..... 2.02:1

Controls

4WD selection type.....Electronic
 rotary dial

Steering type..... Hydraulic assist
 rack and pinion

Wheels..... Steel
 Full-size spare..... Yes

Measurements (mm)

Height..... 1821
 Length..... 5274
 Width..... 2163
 Wheelbase..... 3220
 Front/rear track..... 1560/1560

Fuel consumption (l/100km)

Fuel capacity..... 80 litres
 120km/h..... 8
 Urban..... 12
 Average..... 10
 Calculated range @ average..... 800km

Performance

0-100km/h..... 18.3secs
 100-120 km/h..... 6.5secs
 Maximum speed..... 175km/h
 Rpm @ 120km/h..... 2400

Recovery points

Front..... Yes
 Rear..... Yes

Underbody protection

Front diff..... Yes – steel plate
 Centre diff/transfer case..... No
 Fuel tank..... Yes – steel plate
 Rear diff..... No

Load and towing capabilities (kg)

Tare..... 1963
 GVM..... 3200
 CVM..... 5000
 Load capacity..... 1092
 Towing capacity (unbraked)..... 750
 Towing capacity (braked)..... 1800

Brakes

Front..... Vented discs
 Rear..... Drums
 ABS..... Yes

Warranties, maintenance and service

Warranty..... 4-year/120 000km
 Service plan..... 5-year/90 000km
 Service intervals..... 15 000km





TARA THE TERRIBLE

A STORY OF MONEY, THE MOON, AND A BET THAT WAS WON

WORDS & PICTURES **ROGER GAISFORD**

Money is common-enough stuff and is found in most pockets; and gold is commonly seen adorning the wealthy – it has a lovely sheen and speaks of wealth. Found in the wild in its natural state, as specks in rock or as dust in a pan, it fires great excitement.

The desire for gold, and the wealth it generates, has spurred many on to try to find the metal – finds that have led to such Ophirs as the Witwatersrand, Kalgoorlie, the Klondike, and even, to a much lesser degree, the Tati in Botswana, where there was once a gold rush. And there it was, that a fellow by the name of Moose got mixed up. Not just with gold, but also with a woman and drink. It was all to do with the moon.

The Tati Concession of North East Botswana is a place of scrub, bush, granite koppies, ridges of rocky schist, and mostly dry watercourses. It lies between the Shashe River in the west and Ramokgwebana River in the east – the border with Zimbabwe. It was here, in 1866, while hunting elephants near the confluence of the Tati and Shashe Rivers, that Henry Hartley had been shown old mine workings by his African guides. He, in turn, took the geologist Karl Mauch to the area, where Mauch confirmed the existence of substantial deposits of gold.

This led to a rush of miners and the establishment of Tati Town, a lively burg, complete with a steam-powered three-stamp mill for crushing ore, a hotel, bars, and places of entertainment. Mines with names such as Todd's Creek, Blue

Jacket, New Zealand, New Prospect, Black Jack, Dead Mule and Monarch sprung up. But yields were found to be disappointing.

Then the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley saw an almost universal departure of miners for what was perceived to be greener pastures. In 1887, the Matebele king, Lobengula, granted this piece of land – the Tati Concession – to Sir John Swinburne. By that time, only the Monarch Mine showed any promise, and it was near the Monarch that, in 1897, a man named Daniel Francis built a shop and laid out the town which bears his name.

It was to this Francistown that Moose found himself headed in early 1970.

Moose was from someplace on the outskirts of Pretoria. Although christened Peter by his proud parents, a longish

face saw him accorded the name Moose by his friends. At the time of our story, Moose was studying education at the University of the Witwatersrand. However, long hours at pool, poker and dominoes in Pop's Café, and drinking with his mates in the Devonshire Hotel bar opposite the university, did little to advance his academic career; and, in 1970, his long-suffering parents declared that enough was quite enough and that he should shift for himself.

Determined to complete his degree, he went to work for a year to finance his further studies. A friend who had found himself in a similar predicament had worked for a Johannesburg-based mining company prospecting for diamonds in the Kalahari of Botswana. He'd had an adventurous time and had made enough money to finance his final years of study. Following his example, Moose took a job as a Geological Field Assistant with The Eastern Districts Geological Exploration Company, EDGECO.

Based in Johannesburg, and with an office in Francistown, the company was engaged in gold and copper-nickel exploration in the Tati Concession. The base camp was at the Swinburne Reef in the bush south-east of Francistown. A house in town served as weekend accommodation for field staff come to top-up supplies or hoot it up at the hotels or clubs with golf, tennis or snooker.

So it was that, in the heat of early January 1970, Moose took up residence in the camp at Swinburne Reef near Matsiloje – a bustling and busy place of geologists, field assistants, drillers, mechanics and labourers working on a potentially rich nickel deposit near the Rhodesian border.

There, Moose led a wonderfully wild life. He started work as the first light of dawn touched the bush, and his job was to find reservoirs of water beneath the deep sand of the Ramokgwebana River bed, which, except for times of heavy rain, seemed bone dry. The water from

these reservoirs was pumped, from a wellpoint sunk into the sand, to supply the machines drilling for core samples of ore at Swinburne.

Moose used a wagon drill – a percussion machine operated by compressed air – to find these reservoirs. Holes were drilled through the sand at 10-metre intervals in lines across the river bed. The wagon drill, mounted on two wheels, was towed behind a well-used Series 2A Land Rover. At some time in the past, its floor plates had disappeared, thus affording the driver a close-up view of the road disappearing beneath his feet.



Laying corrugated track so that the knackered, but still willing, Series 2A Land Rover can pull the drilling rig to its next position on the river bed.

The heavy drilling machine, on its skinny tyres, was difficult to move through the soft dry sand of the river bed; the whole lot simply bogged down, leaving the Land Rover whining desperately as its wheels spewed sand about. To improve matters, Moose laid sheets of corrugated roofing iron on the sand to form a track.

It was late one morning, some days after commencing operations in the river bed, that MacDonward and a friend appeared from the bush on the Rhodesian side of the river, walked over, and greeted Moose. They had heard the racket created by the machines and were curious to see what was going on. (In those days, there was no fence or other sort of barrier marking the international boundary that was the middle of the riverbed, and locals crossed without constraint to visit friends, or even to shop in Francistown.)

MacDonward was a cattle rancher, and invited Moose to come for refreshments whenever the mood took him – pointing to a rocky koppie overlooking the river nearby on the Rhodesian side, he said, “House is up there, come for a beer,” before he and his friend returned to their cattle in the wild bush country of Mphoengs in Rhodesia.

During a lull in drilling some days later, when the air compressor needed servicing, Moose took up MacDonward's offer. After grinding in low gear through the deep sand of the dry riverbed, the Land Rover launched itself up the bank to find the track that took him to

MacDonward's homestead.

This was built into the great boulders high up on the koppie, with a view over miles of river and bush. The house consisted of four rondavels connected by high loop-holed walls, making a fort-like square. Moose was cheerfully greeted by MacDonward's pretty blonde wife, Ally, and presented with a tankard of cold beer.

“Have a dip, if you like,” she said, waving him down some steps among boulders

to a pool built into the rocks, “John will be home soon for lunch. I take it you will join us?”

And so he and the MacDonwards became great friends, and he spent many happy evenings with them at their lovely home.

Some time later, Moose completed the survey of the riverbed and moved to a camp on the Lady Mary Ranch, closer to Francistown. His tent was pitched beneath big trees on the bank of the Tati River, and his job was to sample the gold-bearing reef in the old mines.

There was more to this sampling than the word suggests. These mines had last been worked 80 years before, and, although maps showed their whereabouts, it still took hours of pushing through bush to find them – the Land Rover crashing through mopane scrub, grinding over rocky outcrops, and moaning through deep sand.

Some of the shafts were close to 30 metres deep, and the samples had to be taken as far down the workings as possible. This entailed climbing down a ladder suspended in mid-air, in the shaft. Support timbers had long since disappeared and the entrance to the shafts was loose and dangerous. A safety harness would, with luck, prevent Moose plummeting to the depths if he slipped off the ladder. The job was nerve-racking.

As a diversion, Moose crushed ore, and panned it, and over time, he collected a little stash of gold dust and particles, which he kept in a fish-paste jar.

On Saturdays, Moose joined his colleagues at the office in town to deliver samples, submit reports and stock up on food and equipment. Then it was on to the Grand Hotel for cold beers to unwind from the terrors of the ladder and the shafts. Later, it was to the Francistown Club. It was there, while playing pool, that Moose met Tara The Terrible – a skinny, dark-haired girl who lived with her parents and a brood of brothers and sisters in a rambling house on the banks of the Ngezi River, a short distance out of town. Tara was a law student at the university in Salisbury, where she supplemented her pocket money by selling hooch, brewed using fruit peels from the hostel kitchen. Tara loved pool and had developed a reputation for being almost unbeatable at the game – hence her name, The Terrible.

From years of practice at Pop's and the Devonshire Hotel in Braamfontein, Moose considered himself a dab hand at the game; but, to his frustration, he never managed to beat Tara. Her challenge was always, "Winner calls the tune." Time and again he lost to her, and was forced to provide drinks for the rest of the evening, or stand her to braais, or clean

her motorcycle; and, once, chauffeur her and a beau to a wedding.

At the end of the year, Moose left Francistown to continue his studies. He had had a most interesting and adventurous time, and was totally in awe of the old Land Rover which had carried him with little complaint for his months in the bush. He never lost his fear of descending the ladder into the stygian depths of the shafts, but was,



Descending to the stygian depths was no fun for Moose. **Below** His camp on the banks of the Tati River on the Lady Mary Ranch.

nevertheless, determined to return to Francistown to beat The Terrible at her game. He was, it must be said, smitten with her.

Some years later, Moose qualified to teach English and History. He was determined to get back to the bush, so, early in 1975, he took a position at the newly-opened school at Orapa which provided lessons for children of the staff working at the diamond mine there.

Orapa and its surrounds was full of interest, not only at the mine village with its mixture of people working there, but

also in the wild bush country beyond. He was able to get out with friends, to explore the Makgadikgadi Pans and a hill called Khubu, on the south-western shores of Sua Pan. There were also the vast open spaces of the Kgalakgadi; in those days teeming with wildebeest, hartebeest, springbok – and, on the north-west pans, vast herds of zebra. There were lion, hyena (both spotted and brown), and occasionally leopard. The bird life was enthralling.

In all this, Moose had not forgotten Tara The Terrible. On occasion, he would visit Francistown, spending time in the hotels and clubs for a game of pool and a beer. News of Tara was always vague. She was travelling by overland truck to Europe, or working in an escort agency in Joburg, or was about to be married to a millionaire cattle farmer from Mahalapye.

It was during the long weekend at the end of September, when Botswana celebrated its independence from Britain, that Moose decided to visit his old haunts in the Tati and to visit his friend MacDonward at his ranch in the bush along the Ramokgwebana River. Moose was now the proud possessor of a Land Cruiser pickup, which he had bought second-hand from an Australian engineer who was returning home. The vehicle, a 1973

3.8-litre FJ45 four-speed, was

well set up – it had an extra petrol tank, a 100-litre water tank, a Hi-Lift jack and sand channels. Moose was very pleased with his purchase.

Arriving in Francistown late on the Friday afternoon, he decided on a beer at the Grand Hotel. After a beer in the bar, he wandered into the pool room, and there, to his absolute joy, he found Tara in a game with a cattle buyer. She grinned at him, and said, "Come for a game? Winner calls the tune?"

What could he say? The game was on. To his inexpressible joy, Moose won.

"I call the tune?" he said to Tara. She nodded, with a grin.

"Well, would you please accompany me to visit John and Ally MacDonward who farm on the Ramokgwebana near Mphoengs?"

"Lead on, MacDuff," she said, shouldering her bag.

Moose chatted happily to The Terrible that evening as the Land Cruiser rattled and banged its way on the well-remembered track that followed the Tati River south-east out of Francistown. The track wound about before branching to the east, becoming little more than a donkey path through the bush. The moon rose orange and huge through the bush before them.

"Wow, isn't that beautiful!" said Tara. "Got any beer?" Indeed he had, and stopping the Cruiser, indicated the cool-box in the back of the truck. She returned with cold ones dripping moisture.

"Yoicks, looks like you are preparing for a long trip with all the beer and meat you've got packed in there."

"Yep," he said.

"MacDonward fed and watered me royally in the past; now it's my turn."

"Is he expecting you?" asked Tara.

"No," replied Moose. "Surprise."

A while later, Moose found the track to the bank of the Ramokgwebana, and the crossing to MacDonward's house. Engaging four-wheel-drive, the truck growled in Cruiser fashion as it crossed the 200 metres of loose sand, before moaning up the loose sand of the river bank and into the riverine bush. All was in darkness at MacDonward's fort of a house.

"Hmm," he said, at the heavy entrance door. Knocking loudly, he called, "Hellooooo, anyone home?"

Beyond a fiery-necked nightjar calling on the good Lord to deliver us, there was not a sound.

"Doesn't seem as if anyone's here. Let me find out from his staff; they live behind the koppie." So saying, he left

Tara and walked off, the moon lighting his way.

At the staff quarters, he found an ancient, by the name of Dilori, reclining in a kgotla chair at the embers of a small fire, with his home-made cigarette drifting smoke. He explained that MacDonward was in Bulawayo for the weekend. Because of the deteriorating security situation in Rhodesia, MacDonward had moved his family to Bulawayo. Joshua Nkomo's people, ZAPU, Dilori said, had attacked farms, killed uncooperative labour, shot up farm houses and laid mines in the road.

"Too dangerous for missus and children. Mr Mac, he stay here to look after cattle in week, go to missus on Friday, come

fire seemingly directed at them. Then the blast of an explosion at the house: a grenade, or something of the sort.

"Get out," hissed Tara, jumping out of the water. "Quick," she urged, and slipped into a recess among the boulders overlooking the pool. More automatic gunfire was followed by the sound of an engine starting. Moose and Tara crouched among the great boulders, their passage marked by water splashes.

"Oh b... and s... and etc. etc.," she muttered. Then with shouts and some slamming of doors and sporadic shots of farewell, the truck roared off into the dark. "It's your Cruiser," said Tara. "They've taken it."

"Blast!" muttered Moose, as peace descended on the bush once more. And "Blast!" again. "It was my Cruiser." As silence again enveloped the bush, the nightjar resumed its exhortations to the good Lord and crickets again took up their refrain. "I'm getting cold," said Tara, creeping from among the boulders to retrieve her clothes.

As light lit the land the next morning, Moose found Dilori busy at his fire. "Boss want tea?"



Moose's Land Cruiser proudly parked outside the Grand Hotel in Francistown.

back Monday, ver' early," he said, with a long draw on his cigarette.

Back at the Land Cruiser, Moose discovered that Tara was nowhere to be seen. He called, and was answered: "Come this way. I'm in the pool; bring beer."

Feeling unsettled by what the old man had told him, Moose was at first inclined to call Tara back so that they could get the hell out of the place. But the night was dead still and peaceful, and the moon beautiful and full of magic. Moose packed beer, a bottle of wine, biscuits and cheese, and joined Tara at the pool. Her clothes made a dark smudge on the rocks. "Jump in," she said. "It's heaven." And it certainly was.

It was some time later, the moon now high in the heavens, the beer and wine and snacks but a memory, that they were shaken by the sound of gunfire close by,

he said, and poured Moose and Tara a most welcome mug of tea with lots of sugar, all the while going on about the sins and shortcomings of Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU.

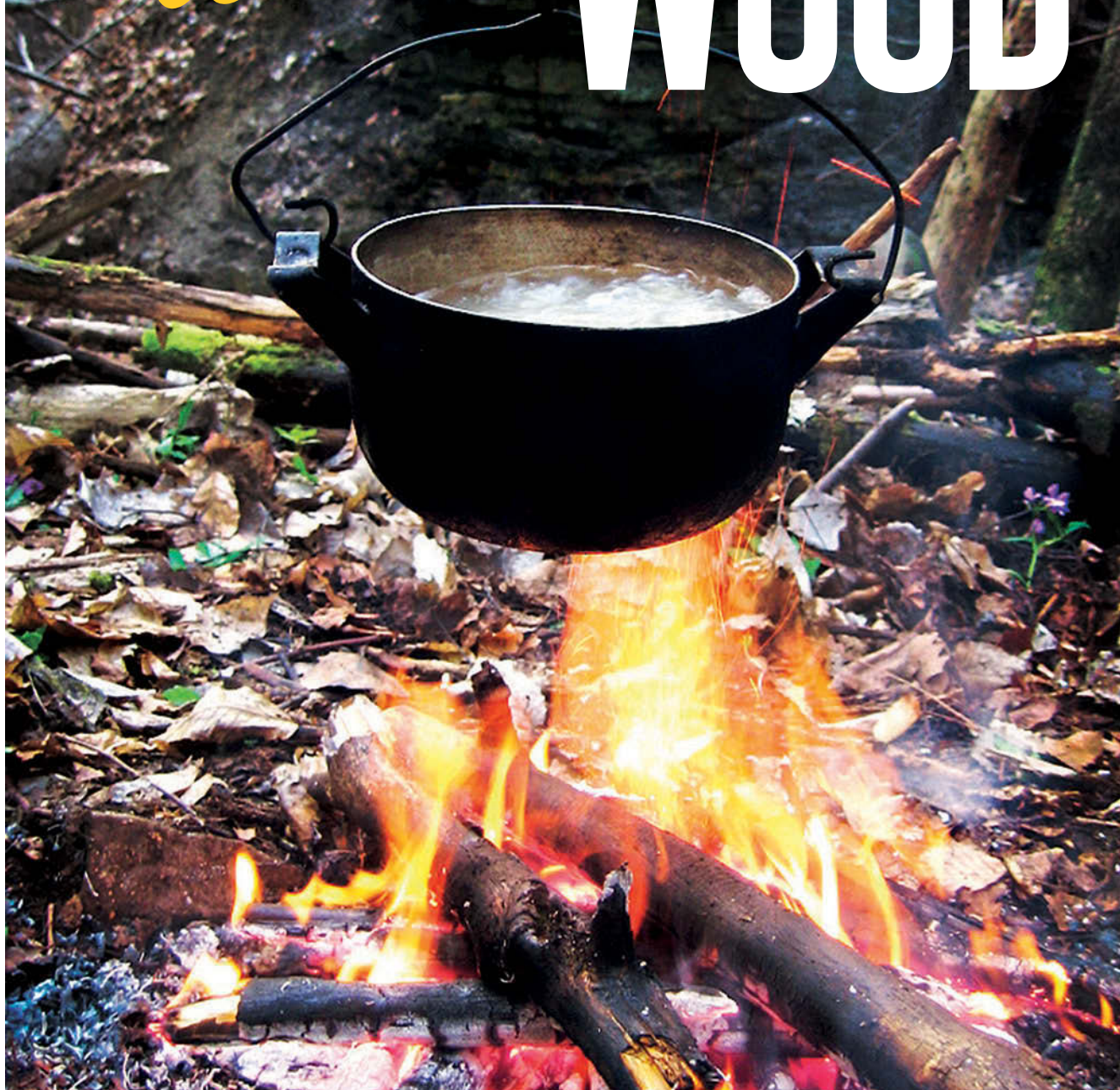
Now on foot, Moose and Tara crossed the Ramokgwebana and trudged to the Swinburne Reef, where a mine was now in full swing. The chief geologist greeted Moose like a long-lost relative and, after words of encouragement, treated them to a slap-up breakfast in the mess. He also organised transport to Francistown.

There was very little Moose could do about the loss of his Land Cruiser. He had been in Rhodesia illegally, not having crossed via an official border post, and he accepted his loss with equanimity. He had, however, gained something far more precious: a champion pool player who now wore a ring of Tati gold, and he had called the tune. ■

COOKING *with* WOOD

Knowing about the different woods we use for our camping meals is basic bushcraft, and can make a difference to the taste and enjoyment of your braai

WORDS PETER DUGMORE





Acacia



Marula



Leadwood



Kameeldoring/ Camel thorn



Whether you grill your food over open coals or flame, wood smoke is the essential component of the smoky flavour characterising all great campfire cooking. For a real braai, you need real wood! What many people don't appreciate, though, is that different woods contribute significantly different flavours.

It's also important to draw a distinction between cooking with wood and cooking with charcoal. Even though charcoal is derived from wood, in the process of making it, the distillates in the wood are burned off – and with them most of the intrinsic flavour of the wood.

Different wood types give off different types of smoke and thus impart different flavours. Other points of difference include the heat given off by some woods as compared with others; the quality and consistency of coals produced by them; the relative densities and strength of the wood smoke generated; and the distinctive colouring which the smoke of woods (such as

oak and orange) give to various classes of foods.

The chemistry of smoke

All woods contain minerals and trapped gases – most obviously carbon, but also potassium, nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen and also trace minerals like sodium and sulphur. These trace elements are acquired mainly from the ground in which the tree is planted.

In the same way that different soil and micro-climates contribute to differences in flavour of wines from the same vine stock, so do they contribute differences in the flavour of wood smoke from the same tree species growing in varying soil compositions in different parts of the country.

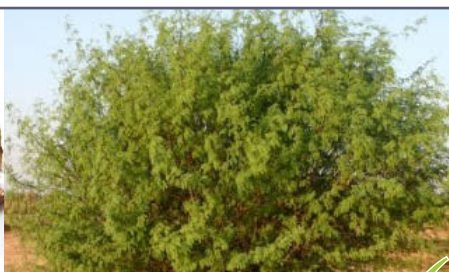
While soil and climate can be as important for wood smoke, if not more so than the tree species themselves, there are definite regional favourites. Woods with a global appeal and distribution, which are readily available in southern Africa, include mesquite, vine roots, and oak.



Protea Nitida



Mesquite



Rooikraans

Local choices

We South Africans use local hardwoods mainly for grilling and as a heat source. If you want to ‘burn South African’ and use only woods indigenous or native to southern and central Africa for your braais, you will find that most of the mature acacias found in open and wooded savannah work well.

So does marula. In drier areas, mopane and leadwood are both good. In the Cape Province, rooikrans (technically not an indigenous wood, but try telling that to any local braaimaster!) is excellent both as a firewood, and arguably – using slightly wetted chips – as one of our better woods for generating flavourful wood smoke. So are the larger species of protea; in particular, protea nitida, the waboom protea.

In the Karoo, along the west coast of South Africa, and in Namibia, mesquite (itself also an alien!) doubles well as wood for both grilling and smoking. And, widespread in Namibia, camelthorn has an attractive smoke quality, and offers up hot and long-lasting coals.

Along the coastline, non-resinous driftwood, so long as it’s free of paint,

tars and oil, is regularly used for both grilling and smoking. Dried kelp or other seaweed can be used to grill shellfish and other seafoods, and if you use them for smoking, they add an appealing hint of the sea.

Where conventional wood is not available, dried coconut husks (along our eastern seaboard) and corncobs (in the Free State, for example) can be used. It’s a good idea to soak them before using them, and to watch the fire carefully to prevent it from flaring and becoming too hot.

While you’re unlikely to find them on safari, dry fruit- and nut woods such as apple, peach, pear, cherry, pecan, walnut and almond give a distinctively ‘soft’ flavour to food, and are ideal for both grilling and smoking fish. Using them to cook meat may require a longer cooking time over a slower fire for a more pronounced smokiness. Or you can mix in some of the other hardwoods mentioned earlier, and those below.

Another option is to use the shells of nuts like pistachio, pecan, and almonds, mixed with other woods, to give a noticeably nutty flavour to food cooked over them.

What woods to use and which to avoid

The tambotie wood, found in parts of southern and central Africa, is extremely toxic to humans – though rhinos love it! Campers eating food prepared over a tambotie-wood fire have been known to become dangerously ill. Oleander is another wood to steer well clear of.

Because many softwoods have significant quantities of sap or resin, food cooked in their smoke tastes acrid and bitter, and they’re best used for heating rather than cooking. They also tend to burn too quickly.

Green or partially-dried wood generally burns cooler than dry wood, and lasts longer, so it’s better suited to slow-cooking meat like lamb than it is to searing and grilling steak. And the denser wood closer to the centre of the log, or heartwood, burns hotter and longer than pith or sapwood from the same tree, with a much ‘cleaner’ flame.

The dense, red heartwood found in mature black wattle trees which have died naturally from old age is, in my view, equivalent to camelthorn and rooikrans in the heat and quality of the coals it produces.

WHICH WOOD FOR WHICH FOOD?

All seasoned braaiers will have their own views as to which is the best wood for braaing different foods. Here's a list from a selection of outdoor-cooking enthusiasts.



FISH: Woods from most fruit and nut trees (almond, apple, apricot, cherry, fig, grapefruit, guava, lemon, lime, nectarine, orange, peach, pear, pecan and plum) impart a slightly sweeter flavour to both grilled and smoked fish, particularly when combined with a more strongly flavoured wood such as mesquite. Waboom protea, wild pear and rooikrans are good, indigenous, southern African woods, for both their grilling and smoking properties. For a milder, softer flavour, marula is a good local equivalent to beech.



PORK: Acacia, almond, apple, apricot, fig, grapefruit, grapevine, guava, lemon, lime, maple, marula, mopani, mulberry,

naartjie, nectarine, orange, peach, pear, pecan, plum, and waboom protea are all good for pork.

**BEEF, LAMB, VEAL AND VENISON:**

Selecting one best wood for grilling all of these meat varieties is a tough call! Most of the woods listed above for pork work well, and acacia, oak, mesquite and walnut in particular (providing it is mixed with a lighter flavoured wood) provide the slightly more robust smoky flavour which beef, lamb and venison require. Milder woods, such as the fruit and nut woods, should be used for cooking veal; it has a very delicate flavour which can easily be overwhelmed.

POULTRY: Acacia, almond, apple, apricot, fig, grapefruit, grapevines, lemon, maple, mulberry, nectarine, olive, orange, peach, pear, pecan, and plum are all esteemed braai and smoke woods for poultry. Indigenous forest and bushveld woods include Waboom protea, wild pear, mopani, camelthorn and rooikrans. For larger birds such as turkeys and geese, the softer woods mentioned above can benefit from being mixed with a little acacia, mopani or oak. Even foods which are notionally the same can benefit from different wood smoke strengths and

smoking times. Many braai masters, for example, prefer a more assertive smoke flavour for store-bought chickens (their flavour is often somewhat insipid!) and a softer smoke for true, free-range chickens – where too heavy a smoke would suppress the natural flavour of the birds.

Another useful, not very widely-known tip is to choose woods which match the traditional accompaniments to the foods you're smoking. Pork, for example, is traditionally served with apple sauce. While much more subtle, the same flavour is suggested when using apple wood for smoked ham and other pork products. Similarly, apricot wood smoke, as a reflection of the flavour of dried apricots used in many sosatie (kebab) recipes, works well with lamb, and the smoke from mango wood carries a suggestion of mango-based chutneys and relishes.

While true cold-smoked foods require a smoker or smokehouse to prepare them, seasoned braaiers, looking for a heightened smokiness to their cooking, typically sprinkle dampened sawdust or wood shavings onto the hot coals under their grilled offerings. Damping the dust or wood chips not only gives a richer smoke cloud, but also prevents unwanted flaring.



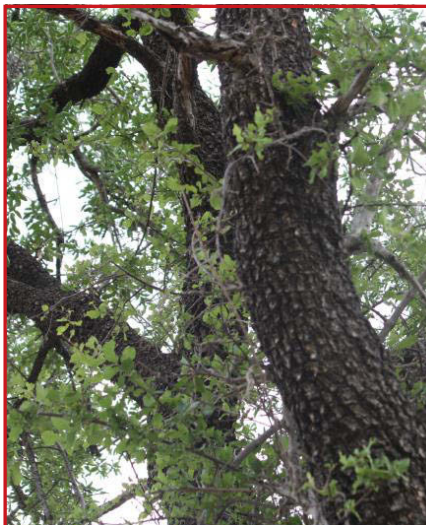
BRAAI MASTER



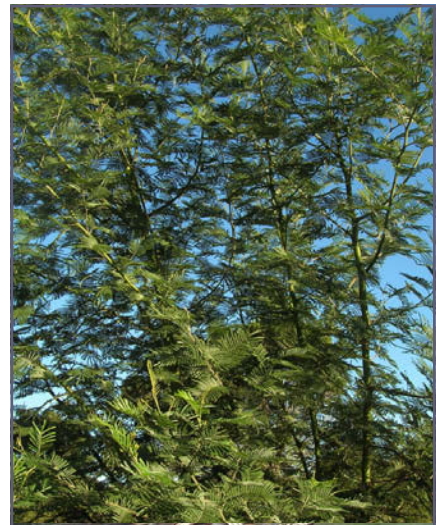
Mopane



Driftwood



Tamboti



Black wattle



Avoid using wood scraps and chips from building sites or general-purpose joinery or cabinet works – they're often full of potentially toxic and also nasty-tasting stuff like paint, varnish, borer repellents, glue and the like.

Committed woodfire aficionados always have an eye open for landowners or friends who are cutting out or pruning their fruit and other hardwood trees, and who generally are more than willing to give away a few logs when asked. Remember, though, to dry them out, and to strip all bark, lichens and moss from the wood; they can make the food taste bitter, and, in extreme cases, they can also be toxic.

Woods in the wild

The question most asked is how, if you're in the bush, in terrain which is completely new to you, do you recognise the best trees for firewood from bad or indifferent ones?

We generally take a tree book with us – one which covers the area we're going to, and which also covers the topical use to which the wood from the trees described in it can be put. In the absence of a reference source, though, here are some pointers we've found useful:

- Avoid any wood which, in its green

state, has a milky or latex-like sap. (Fig is a notable exception – as long as it's well dried and 'solid'). Look for mature, dead trees which are still standing. Old trees which die naturally 'on their feet' tend to be extra hard and seasoned, but trees which have fallen over can be at any stage of decomposition. Black wattle is a good example: cut down a mature tree and allow the wood to dry, and even the wood from a very old tree will season out relatively soft and quick-burning. But, cut down the same tree, three or four years after it has died, and is still standing, and the wood is hard, dense and long-burning.

- Choose dead wood which feels heavy and dense when you pick it up, where there is relatively little pith or sapwood, and where the heartwood is dark in colour. And, if you can,

choose dead trees where the bark has peeled off naturally. If the bark is still on, make a point of stripping it off before using the wood.

The reason for this is that if a tree is toxic, the toxins generally reside in the roots, leaves, fruit – or bark. So do stinkbugs and other nasty-tasting insects!

- Avoid burning conifers for cooking. They're okay for heating, but their high resin content can taint the food and make it bitter. The same applies to certain eucalypts and gums – although, if they've been dead for a long time, and are completely dried out, they can make good grilling woods. Finally, avoid woods which, even when dead, have an oily appearance to the wood; like tambotie, for example.

Enjoy your outdoor cooking! ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Dugmore was born in Zimbabwe and spent much of his childhood and early adult life in the Rhodesian bush. He is a confirmed foodie, and has written a selection of books on all facets of outdoor cooking.

His books can be viewed on his website at www.bbqtipsandtricks.com. Parts of this article were extracted and condensed from the author's *The BIG Book of Outdoor Cooking* (Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00FBFRVW4>)

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GRIP & GRIN

**Open, limited-slip or locking differential?
In the search for traction, there are up-sides, down-sides and a few options...**

WORDS & PICTURES **MARTIN PRETORIUS**

First, there was four-wheel-drive; then came the differential lock. Of these two mechanical innovations, it was possibly the latter that turned off-roading into a more fulfilling activity: it made it easier for even a novice to make a vehicle climb over seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and it liberated the extra traction that enabled four-wheeling die-hards to push their steeds to greater achievements.

Production vehicles like the Mercedes G-Wagen and Land Cruiser really drove home the advantages of having a plentiful supply of differential locks fitted to your off-roader, but it's

only fairly recently that lockers started becoming standard equipment in mainstream off-roaders. This means that there is still a horde of older (or less well-equipped) vehicles that would benefit greatly from a fairly simple upgrade. As with most things motoring, there are several options available for improving a vehicle's off-road traction, thanks to a range of aftermarket retro-fit systems.

Would a locking diff turn any four-wheel drive vehicle into a rock crawler?

In an ideal world, yes. However, not all systems are compatible

with proper locking diffs. For instance, there isn't much that can be done to improve the on-demand all-wheel-drive systems fitted to softroaders and urban SUVs – but that doesn't really matter: their lack of ground clearance usually brings them to a halt long before the electronically-assisted traction management system runs out of talent.

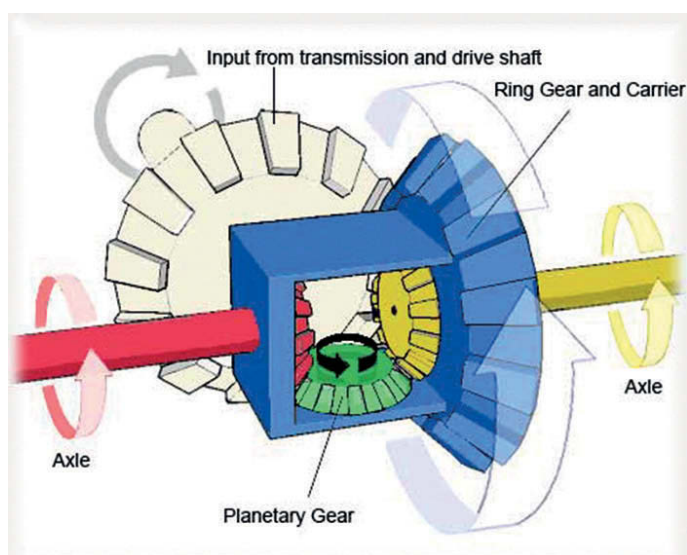
So, for the purpose of this article, we will focus on heavier-duty systems: devices that improve the off-road abilities of low-range-equipped 4x4 bakkies and SUVs.

How would it improve the performance of my off-roader?

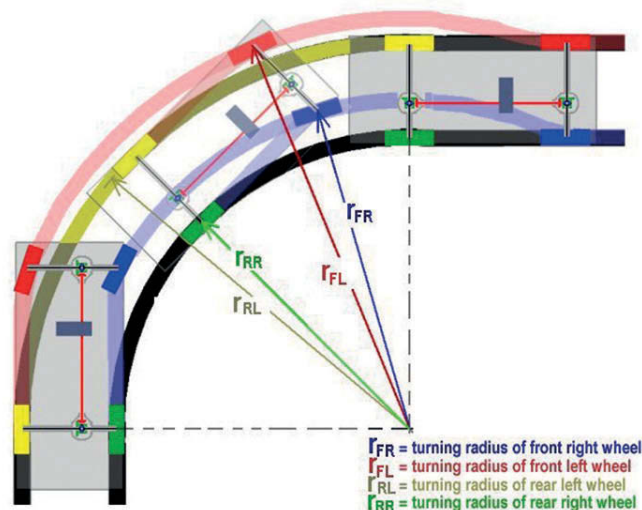
One doesn't have to drown in the technical details that explain the inner workings to understand what differentials are supposed to do. When visualising the arcs traced by a vehicle's wheels during a turn, one can clearly see that the inner wheels travel a shorter distance than the outside wheels do. The same applies to the rear wheels in relation to the front ones, where the rear axle takes a shorter route around the corner.

On an all-wheel-drive vehicle, these distance variations are compensated for by a set of three differentials – one on each driven axle, and one in the connection between the front and rear axles – which allow the various driven wheels to turn at different speeds. The longer the trajectory, the faster the wheel turns.

However, there is a problem right here, as far as off-road-biased 4WD systems are concerned: in an open differential (where there is no restriction on the allowable wheel-speed difference), the torque will always take the path of least resistance. If even one of the wheels lifts clear of the ground, and there are no locking differentials at all, the lifted wheel will speed up and remove all the tractive force from its colleagues on the other corners of the vehicle. And, without tractive force, you will simply stop moving.



Planetary gear in an 'open' differential allows for variance in the speed of the sideshafts.



Inner wheels scribe a shorter arc than the outside ones, and, importantly for 4WD vehicles, the rear axle takes a shorter route around the corner. Without differentials, drivetrain wind-up occurs.

But my SUV has stability control, so the wheels shouldn't spin.

That is theoretically correct, because the spinning wheel shouldn't rotate more than a few revolutions before the stability control system actuates the brakes to regain traction. However, this is a reactive approach: it relies on a measure of wheel slip occurring before braking is applied, which slows down the spinning wheel and thus transfers torque to the opposite wheel. That fraction of slip might be just enough to dig that wheel into a cosy little trench (if, say, you're trying to plough through a mud pool), making it even more difficult for the wheel to climb out of trouble. It's also rather punishing on the brake pads during sustained use.

So what can be done, if the computer alone cannot secure my traction?

A more elegant solution rests in restricting the speed difference between the wheels mechanically, by fitting either a limited-slip or locking differential on as many axles as possible. Obviously, this could end up costing a fortune: reckon on up to R25 000 per axle to have an ARB locking diff system fitted.

Fortunately, most 4WD systems already incorporate a locking centre differential, which typically splits torque equally between the front and rear axles, thus doubling the chance of some torque reaching the ground. Some full-time 4WD systems go one step further, and incorporate a viscous coupling as a centre differential, to take care of the front-to-rear speed difference.

That sorts the torque distribution front-to-rear, but what about side-to-side?

There are various methods to limit the speed difference between the left- and right- drive wheels on the same axle. One method, which requires no driver intervention, is the limited-slip differential (LSD). This type allows a speed difference

between the output shafts, just like an open differential, but only up to a certain point. When the speed difference exceeds a pre-determined level, the two output shafts are connected, usually by a clutch pack or a viscous coupling, in an attempt to equalise the wheel speeds.

On surfaces where one wheel has considerably less traction than the other (and tries to spin), the speed difference causes the diff to start locking up, sending torque to the wheel with more traction. The amount of torque applied to equalise the two driven wheels is termed the “bias ratio”. Bias ratios can be varied by different clutch release spring pre-loads or coupling designs, but ratios around 2:1 are most common, which means that up to 66% of the available torque could theoretically be sent to the wheel with the most traction. Some special LSD units, such as the Vari-Lok system used on some Jeeps, can send up to 95% of the torque to a single wheel – provided that the locking mechanism is in good health.

Limited-slip differentials have one problem, though: they still need both wheels to maintain at least a measure of grip on the ground, because they never lock up solidly. This means that, should one wheel be clear of the ground, its counterpart will still not receive any torque. And, just as with brake-actuated traction control, a limited-slip differential is still a reactive system which needs a certain amount of wheel slip before torque is diverted to the other driven wheel.

Yet again, sometimes that little bit of wheelspin is enough to dig you into the mud-pool very nicely. However, LSDs work well in combination with traction control systems, because the application of braking force to the spinning wheel will automatically result in a torque increase on the other wheel as a result of the bias ratio. Sans traction control, one can often achieve the same effect simply by applying the brakes.

A limited-slip diff sounds good, but there's clearly still room for improvement.

While all manner of clever tricks can be employed to keep torque flowing to the wheels with the most traction, the most

effective one is still to devise some way of locking both output shafts into a zero-difference speed ratio.

That's where the serious off-roader's big daddy comes in: the inimitable locking differential. Using almost exactly the same internal hardware as a normal, open diff, a locker adds a simple mechanism that locks the two output shafts solidly together. This mechanism could be actuated in a number of ways – from a simple lever-operated cable to electric motors that engage the

locker, to a push-button switch linked to a compressor that sends a charge of air to engage the diff lock.

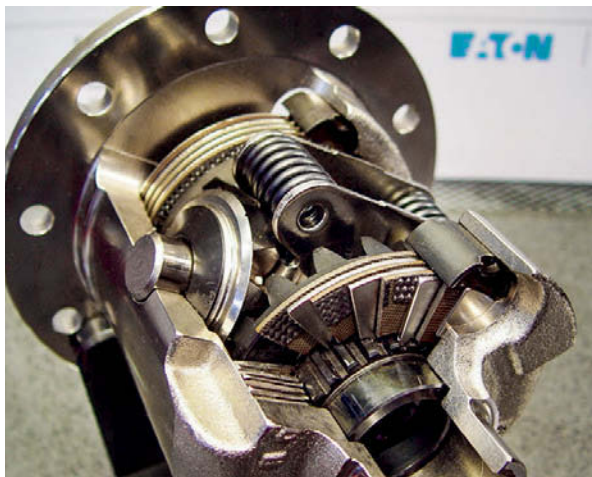
There are advantages and disadvantages to this solution. While traction is maximised because both driven wheels rotate at the same speed regardless of the available traction, this characteristic also means that the vehicle will be reluctant to turn corners. This is why it's a good idea to keep the diff-lock switch mounted close to the steering wheel, especially when performing for a point score at the Rust de Winter Jamboree. Really serious off-roaders can install a front diff lock as well, to make their vehicles as unstoppable as a G-Wagen, but this should be used only under certain extreme conditions because it further compromises the vehicle's steering.

What kind of differential do I need?

It all depends on where you're going to use your vehicle, and how poor the road conditions will be. If you're looking for a bit of extra traction to pull a boat trailer off a ramp, or you frequently have to traverse dirt roads, a normal LSD will do wonders for your off-roader's

mobility. You don't have to do anything to reap the benefits of increased traction, and you will definitely feel a great improvement in handling on wet roads and gravel tracks.

If your off-roader has a stability control system (and you don't try to take it rock-climbing), the chances are that you won't miss the added off-road abilities that a fully-locking diff would bring. But the inherent limitations of an LSD mean that you will not enjoy the same level of competence from your off-roader when you venture onto boulder-strewn or muddy trails.



Limited-slip: Clutch pack delivers variable grip up to a maximum set by the pre-load on the spring. Various alternative mechanisms have been developed.



Air locker: A charge of air from an on-board compressor, activated by a switch on the dash, actuates a gear which locks the sideshafts together.



Tricked Landy with air lockers front and back (dash switches inset) ploughs through a mud field.

Serious off-roaders will be much better served by a properly locking differential (or two, or three). Maintaining the ideal condition of equal wheel speeds, and sending only 25% of the torque to each of the wheels, ups the vehicle's ability to traverse highly unfavourable terrain.

However, locking diffs cannot be used on hard, level terrain. Steering response suffers with diff locks engaged, making it just about impossible to negotiate any corner. Forcing the wheels to turn at the same speed on grippy surfaces creates massive strain on all the drivetrain components: everything downstream of the gearbox is subjected to extreme stress, which will eventually lead to catastrophic failure of the drive shafts, of the transfer case – and even of the locking hubs. If your vehicle is fitted with any locking diff at all, it must be disengaged before you get back on good roads.

Then there's the cost. LSD units are generally less expensive to purchase and install. Their self-contained nature precludes any form of driver interaction. Further, there are no switches, cables or levers to install, and the added cost of air compressors and piping (as needed by air-operated locking diffs) disappears.

It is also seldom necessary to fit a front differential lock, unless your daily commute involves traversing a muddy field and driving straight over a mountain. Most 4x4 bakkies and SUVs cope with almost all off-road conditions with a diff lock on only the rear axle. In fact, differential lock-equipped 4x2 vehicles can go to 90% of the places that their 4x4 brothers can.

Once you get to the point where you need a front diff lock in addition to the rear one, you'll most likely need specialised tyres and a raised suspension as well, but that's another chapter. ■



High-end 4x4 bakkies like this Ranger double-cab have a rear diff lock as standard equipment. Enough to keep going when one of the wheels leaves the ground. Land Cruiser has standard diff locks front and rear, adding to its capability in extreme cross-axle situations.

READERS' RIDES

MELANE HENDERSON

This 2005 Td5 Land Rover Defender short-wheelbase goes by the name Beasto, and is a Drakensberg regular – pictured here with the backdrop of Cathedral Peak. Beasto is one of a collection of Landys owned by the Henderson family, who also have a 1957 Series 1 and 1972 Series 2 in their garage.



WARREN CARNE

The little 1.3 Suzuki Jimny belonging to Warren Carne and his family may be small, but it's not scared of much. Here it was having a blast on the 4x4 course at Mabilingwe Game Reserve near Bela Bela.

FLIP & PIET MARAIS

Flip Marais and his boet Piet found some proper wide-open spaces at the Grootaar Pan in the Kalahari.



THEO HOEKSEMA

This Prado VX 4.0 petrol took Theo Hoeksema on his first off-road experience, in Damaraland Namibia, from Vingerklip to Khowarib Schlucht where the photo was taken, without any trouble except for two flat tyres.



RANDALL BAKER

A bash plate, flush-fitting rock sliders and Cooper Zeon tyres are the only mods Randall Baker made to his 2012 Discovery 4 SDV6 SE before tackling the Van Zyl's Pass and Marienfluss Valley in Koekaland.

MICHAEL JEFFREY

The long road to Sutherland via the Tankwa Karoo stretches out ahead of Michael Jeffrey's Hilux D-4D 4x4. The Toyota has just clocked up 100 000 trouble-free kilometres, says Michael, and is fitted with BF Goodrich tyres, a snorkel, dual-battery system, self-built aluminium canopy with a drawer system, and a fridge.



JONATHAN BYDENDYK

iNyathi, the 2011 Disco 4 SDV6 SE owned by the Bydendyk family, found some respite from the 40 degree heat at the Confluence in Mapungubwe National Park. In December, the family did a 14-day, 3000km trip through the Limpopo reserves, including Marakele and nine camps in the Kruger National Park.

GIEL LAUBSCHER

A bad day on a 4x4 trail is much better than a good day at the office. So says Giel Laubscher, who recently packed up his 2003 Discovery 2 V8 and trekked out with some mates to the 3 Provinces 4x4 trail in Mpumalanga.



READERS' RIDES

MORRIS DU TOIT

Morris du Toit had a good time hanging out on the beach at Sodwana in his 2007 Land Cruiser 4.5 EFI, which is kitted out with everything that opens and shuts. He and his family also visited the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe game reserves, and explored every little *tweespoor* in the area.



TRAVIS HANRATTY

A four-day meander along the remote and scenic Namaqua Eco Trail, which starts at Pella, was just what Travis Hanratty and his family needed. Their 2002 Discovery TD5 apparently handled the sand, rocks and occasional steep climb with ease.



ARTHUR SALVADO

Unstoppable. After completing the Kungwini 4x4 Trail in his stock-standard Trailblazer, that's the verdict from Arthur Salvado on his ride, which he has named 'Mufasa'.



HOW TO GET YOUR PHOTO INTO SA4X4



Send us a high-res photograph (1 MB or larger) of your 4x4 (or, with their permission, a 4x4 owned by an immediate family member). Your submission must be accompanied by your name, address, contact phone number and a short description of vehicle and place. Send your images to editor@sa4x4.co.za. Preference will be given to landscape images: a photo that is wider than it is high.

It may take a few months for your contribution to make it into print, assuming it's publishable in the first place. Unfortunately, some photographs aren't suitable for publication, and no correspondence will be entered into on this point.

JUNIOR EXPLORERS' CLUB



THIS MONTH'S WINNER

ALBERT BOUWMEESTER
AGE: 10

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Post: Send to Junior Explorers' Club, PO Box 31062, Tokai, 7966

Email: Scan an original drawing or send us digital artwork via email to angus@sa4x4.co.za.

Please make sure you include a photo of yourself together with your name, age and your mom's or dad's contact details (including their email address).

Entries featured on this page will win a mini LA Sport Jeep or another prize of equivalent value. Entries are restricted to children between the ages of three and 12. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



SERENDIPITY ECO OFF ROAD TRAILS



LMP • GRADE 3.5 • SELF
Mookgopong, 12 km • GPS: S24° 37' 00.3" E28° 36' 04.7"



Trail distance: Various
Best time: All year

Min vehicles: 1
Max vehicles: 40

Low-range: Yes
Good ground clearance: Yes

Riette / Wilma, 082 553 3266, info@serendipitytrails.co.za, www.serendipitytrails.co.za

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LMP • GRADE 3.4 • GUIDE
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3PROVINCES 4X4 ADVENTURES



MP • GRADE 2.5 • SELF • GUIDE
Vokkruis, 18km • GPS: S27° 22.076' E29° 44.704'



EVENT: 3 Provinces Battlefield Trophy 2015 – 30 April – 3 May.
Trails: On a farm, at Langkrans, breeding place of the Black Eagle, meet 3 Provinces (Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal & Free State). It is surrounded by mountains, breathtaking ravines and mountain streams with spectacular views. **Accommodation:** Self-catering – 4 Mountain cabins – the Rock cabins, a must when you visit us. Camping is in pristine surroundings at the foot of cliffs, next to a rippling stream and far from civilization. Hot showers & toilets. No electricity. Own tent & 4x4 caravans. Vehicles must have good ground clearance. **Activities:** Clay Pigeon Shooting, Farm dams (angling, swimming & canoeing), relaxing Hiking trails and splash pools along the water streams.

082 785 8002, Tel: 017 735 5286
3provinces4x4@gmail.com, www.3provinces4x4.co.za

4X4@KUNGWINI RUINS TRACKS & TRAILS



GP • GRADE 1.4 • SELF • GUIDE
Bronkhorstspuit, 12 km • GPS: S 25.51.972 E 28.42.033



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Trail distance: 1,4 and 8 Km
Best time: All year
Min vehicles: 1

Max vehicles: 40
Low-range: Yes
Good ground clearance: Yes

Hugo Prinsloo 082 494 0950 • Johan Klopper 083 277 4648
info@4x4kungwini.co.za www.4x4kungwini.co.za

BASS LAKE ADVENTURES



GP • GRADE 2.4 • SELF
Meyerton, 1 km • GPS: S 26° 31' 41.9" E 28° 03' 50.3"



Bass Lake offers a very unique venue, including a 10 ha lake filled with clear spring water. The trail is technical with very interesting obstacles that are vehicle friendly. We offer 4x4 courses / team builds / fun days and can supply vehicles for these bookings. See website. NO 4x2 vehicles! Day visitors welcome. You may swim / kayak / dive / snorkel etc. after your 4 x 4 drive. You may camp over or book into our tented camp, offering "back packers" to en-suite lodges. Casual, fully licensed coffee shop open from breakfast onwards, with take away.

Trail distance: 14km
Best time: All year
Min vehicles: 1

Max vehicles: Call e-mail us, if + 6 vehicles per group, for input
Low-range: Yes
Good ground clearance: Yes

Alan Pepper, 083 250 4385 o/h: (016) 366 1127/8/30, info@basslake.co.za, www.basslake.co.za, www.facebook.com/basslakeadventures

LUDERITZ/KOICHAB 4X4 DUNE TRAIL



NAMIBIA • GRADE 3.4 • GUIDE
Luderitz, 90km • GPS: S26 10 28.3 E15 59 22.2



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Best time: All year
Min vehicles: 10 people

Max vehicles: 14
Low-range: Yes
Good ground clearance: Yes

Heinz : + 264 811288050, + 264 63202958
noextours@gmail.com, http://noextours.weebly.com

TIFFINDELL HIGH ALTITUDE 4X4



EC • SELF • GUIDE • 4X4/4X2
30.6508° S, 27.9263° E

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Contact (045) 974 9004, reservations@tiffindell.co.za, see www.tiffindell.co.za

DE WILDT 4X4



GP • GRADE 2.5 • SELF • 4X4/4X2
Harlebeespoort • GPS FORMAT WGS 84 S29° 40'10.2" E27° 56'45.9"

De Wildt 4x4 is adjacent to De Wildt Cheetah breeding station in the Magaliesberg near Harlebeespoort Dam. The 4x4 Game Park, accessible by 4x4 and 4x2 vehicles, will appeal to gameviewers, birdwatchers and nature lovers. Route includes rock, sand and mud with bypasses. This top class 4x4 Game Park with training venue is ideal for conferences, team building and family outdoor activities, offering excellent game viewing, breathtaking scenery, panoramic views and idyllic overnight facilities in log cabins and campsite. An ideal family get away. Open seven days a week. Also available are swimming pools, picnic area, braai facilities, lapa, pools, mountain biking, hiking etc. We have a new area for private functions with fixed tents, lapa, swimming pool and new bush camp.

Trail distance: 14km
Best time: All year

Good ground clearance: Yes

083 268 8185, 082 554 5334, Fax: 086 679 6133
info@dewildt4x4.co.za, www.dewildt4x4.co.za

KORANNABERG 4X4 ADVENTURES



FS • GRADE 3-5 • Bloemfontein - 135km, Welkom - 155km,
Kroonstad - 162km, Bethlehem - 125km • GPS: S28° 51'55.0" E027° 16'9.24"

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Trail distance: 25km East Route, 28km West Route

Best Time: All year

Min vehicles: 2

Max vehicles: 12

Low-range: Yes

Good ground clearance: Yes

Janus: 079 603 3837, Anorica: 076 860 4023,
koranna.adventures@gmail.com, Facebook: Korannaberg Adventures

RUST DE WINTER 4X4 BUNDU TRAIL



MP • GRADE 3-5 • GUIDE
Pretoria, 100km

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Peter: 082 558 6184, 012 379 1715, admin@4x4atc.org

MOEGATLE 4X4 TRAIL



FS GRADE 3-5 4x4 Guide Brits (North West Province), 34 km
Terrain varies from stone, sand, mud and water GPS 25°24'06.95 S 27°43'36.04 E

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Alex - 082 823 1004, Betsie - 082 441 6270,
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THE NAMIB DESERT

Photos: Paul Salgado



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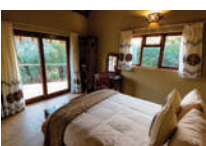




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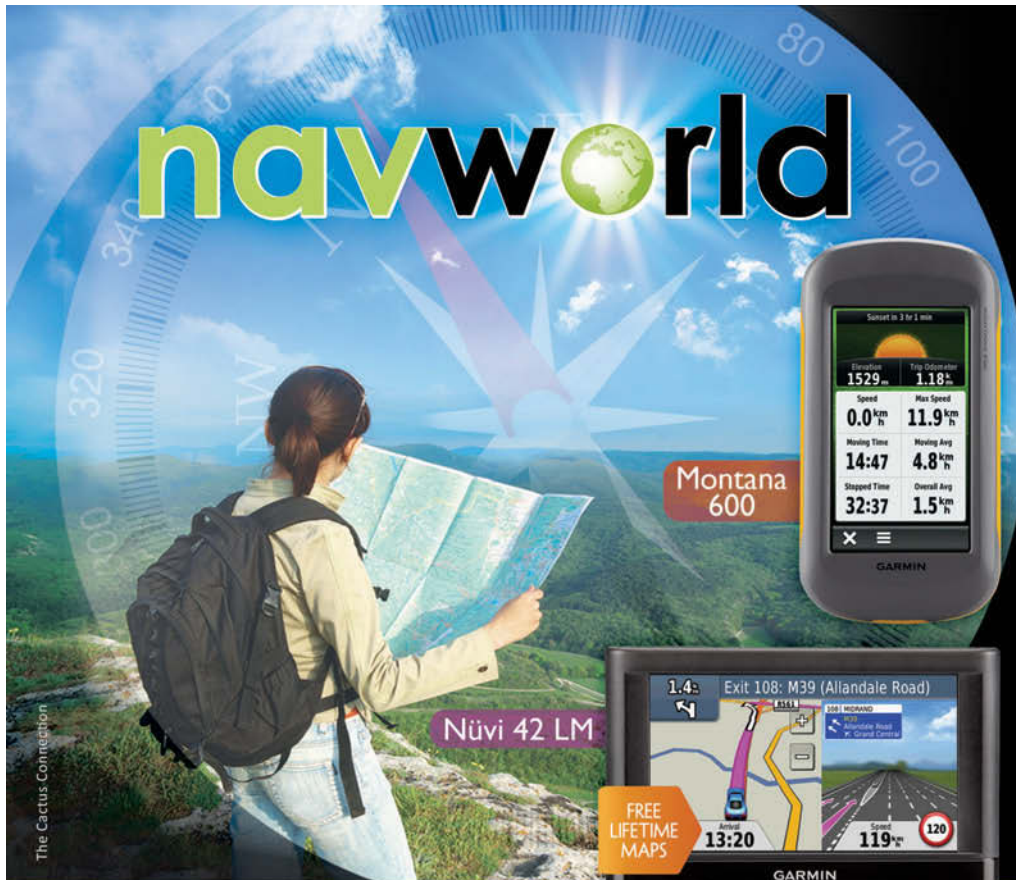
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WORDS KEVIN BOLTON

The restructuring of Garmin Southern Africa meant that NavWorld has been the Garmin SA walk-in service provider since July 2013.

Navworld has three service centres, with a fourth to be opened in the second quarter in KwaZulu-Natal. The head office is at 38 Langwa Road in Strijdom Park, Randburg; the Pretoria walk-in outlet is Unit 2, Oxford Office Park, at 3 Bauhinia Road, Highveld TechnoPark in Centurion; and Cape Town is serviced from Unit 7, Freeway Business Park, Ndabeni.

These outlets service all Garmin customers except those using aviation devices, as NavWorld is not certified to provide this service. A back-up and support service is, however, provided for all Garmin automotive (PND), outdoor, fitness and marine devices. The following services are provided:

Map updates: NavWorld is able to update or reload Garmin's City Navigator maps for a small service fee, although the mapset can be downloaded by users free via the internet. These maps are normally

preloaded when the device is purchased and the device says Life Time Mapping (LM) behind the model number. City Navigator mapping that does not include free updates will incur a map-update cost of about R800 for lifetime updates.

Note that the NavWorld technicians are unable to update Tracks4Africa maps as they are a third-party map set.

The Garmin Topo Pro 2013 maps and Marine Charts come preloaded on an SD Card and therefore cannot be updated. I am not aware of an update yet available for the Topo Pro maps bought online.

Firmware updates: Updating the software of the clients' Garmin devices and/or Garmin programmes on their computer is normally the first step in the fault-finding elimination process for a problematic device. Customers can also do this themselves through a Garmin programme called Garmin Express, which is free on the Garmin website.

Warranties: According to the Garmin website, "All of our products are under warranty for defects in materials or

workmanship for at least one year from the date of purchase". In South Africa, at present, all Nuvi automotive products have a two-year warranty. However, a broken or cracked screen does not qualify as a warranty replacement, nor is water damage, as PNDs do not have a waterproof or water-resistant rating. What would be considered, would be missing mapping which cannot be reloaded, or software that is missing. In general, the warranty applies if the device does not work but there is no physical sign of damage or abuse.

Fixed repair rate: This applies when the device is not covered by warranty but is still supported by Garmin. A device generally remains in support for about three to five years after the device is discontinued. PND devices are available for two years and outdoor devices for five years as a general rule. Fixed repair rates are determined according to when the device was bought and the technician's assessment, and would cover cracked screens, natural wear-and-tear and damaged devices due to an accident; but not abuse.

Trade-ins: This was offered in the past by Garmin, but now only applies as a special promotion.

General technical support: This would include, for example, changing batteries on heart-rate monitors for a small fee, plus fault-finding and troubleshooting on any device that is not performing to expectation. Limited support is offered on Garmin software programmes such as Base Camp or old MapSource.

Training: Garmin device software training or orientation courses are offered during the week after hours, or on Saturday mornings in our shops. In the Western Cape, these courses are held at iWarehouse in Somerset West. This service will be expanded to KwaZulu-Natal and Bloemfontein later this year.

Retail sales: As the Garmin Service Provider, NavWorld strives to carry the full range of Garmin products and accessories for automotive, outdoor, fitness and marine applications. ■

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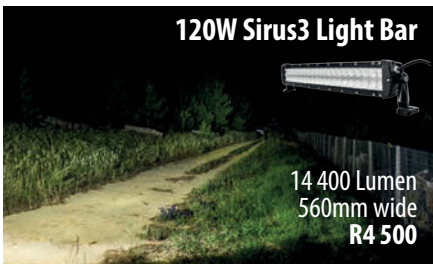
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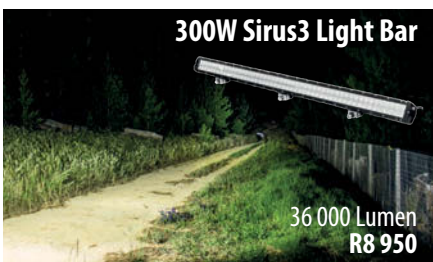
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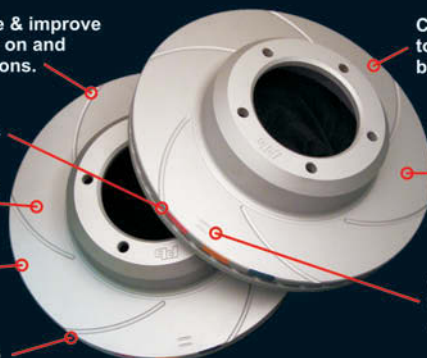
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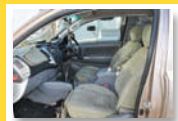
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SEEN & HEARD



Daria and Bobby Peyrot in their CJ-2A. **Below** Etienne de Kok in his ex-Dutch Army Land Rover Lightweight.



OLD TRUCKS BABANANGO HITS THE CAPE

Old Trucks Babanango was held for the first time in the Cape over the weekend of 22 to 23 November 2014. The Kroonland 4x4 track outside Villiersdorp was the venue for a wonderful weekend.

Participants from Cape Town and surrounds, Somerset West, Hermanus and Greyton met in Franschoek for tea and coffee. There was a mixed bag of Old Trucks, with a fair number of Jeeps – including a 1943 MB, late 1940s CJ2As, an ex-SADF CJ6 and a CJ7. There was also a beautifully rebuilt Land Cruiser, a Steyr Puch Haflinger which had to retire because of fuel problems, an ex-Dutch Army Lightweight Land Rover, and Sir Tinley, a 1957 Land Rover 107 Station Wagon driven down from Zululand.

Next, it was on to Kroonland near Villiersdorp, where the vehicles grumbled, growled, whined, rattled and banged on the trails that ended at the campsite.

The event was organised by Dave Ratcliffe and Bobby Peyrot; and the next one is planned for November 2015. Join up if you have an old metal-dashboard truck and a sense of humour. For more, see Old Trucks Babanango on Facebook.

LANDY PARTS OPENS IN JOHANNESBURG

LP4A has expanded its operations by opening a new Branch in Midrand, Johannesburg. This follows 10 years of operating out of Durban and courtering to Gauteng. The branch will be headed by a new management team that will continue to give the same service levels everyone has come to expect from Landy Parts.

LP4A will operate its own delivery service as well as the normal courier service to outlying areas. The spares and accessories range will continue to expand to stay in touch with all the latest Land Rover models, though will not neglect the enthusiasts who run the old Series and Defender models.

Contact the Durban office on 031 701 0262, or check the website www.lp4a.co.za for more on the new branch.

JURGENS CI AND TJM HOOK UP

Jurgens Ci has been awarded the distributorship for southern Africa (SADEC) of the Australian range of TJM four-wheel-drive equipment.

TJM was started back in the Seventies when three adventure-seeking Aussie mates got their off-road thrills with souped-up beach buggies fitted with custom-made bull bars, roll bars and sand tyres. The bars attracted attention, demanding that they get serious. Today's TJM range includes steel and alloy bull bars, nudge bars, side- and rear protection bars, side steps, trade racks, roof racks, Airtec snorkels, TJM-branded recovery equipment, winches, XGS suspension, Pro Lockers, roof-top tents, awnings and more.

TJM products fit well with the Jurgens Ci Leisure market and are complemented by Safari Centre, a brand renowned for its professional 4x4 stores and fitment centres.

The TJM range is available from selected Safari Centres and existing TJM stores. For more, contact your nearest Safari Centre store, or visit www.safaricentre.co.za.

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NEW OUTBACK

A new Subaru Outback has been launched with upmarket new looks, Active Torque Vectoring for more dynamic handling, and the X-Mode suite of off-road driving aids. In keeping with its lifestyle remit, it now features an automated tailgate and longitudinal roof rails which quickly convert to lateral crossbars.

The engine choices have been expanded to include a 3.6-litre petrol flat six, in addition to the 2.5-litre petrol boxer four and 2.0-litre boxer diesel. Engines are mated to Subaru's Lineartronic CVT transmission and Symmetrical All Wheel Drive.

External changes include a new grille, sleeker profile and rugged lower-body mouldings for protection in the rough. The cabin is essentially all-new, featuring all the latest toys, and a refined, pared-away premium feel that echoes both Swedish and German design.

Pricing starts from R479 000, through to R529 000 for the 3.6, and includes a 3-year/75 000km comprehensive maintenance plan.



EVOQUE UPDATED

Land Rover's fast-selling Evoque has been updated with a raft of new features and technologies to improve safety, performance, efficiency and design.

External updates include a new front bumper, two new grille designs, all-LED headlamps and four all-new alloy wheel choices.

Interior changes include new seats and door casings, an all-new eight-inch infotainment touchscreen and the introduction of new trim colours and materials.

The new EU6-compliant four-cylinder Ingenium engines offer higher levels of refinement and efficiency; however, in South Africa and in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) markets, the SD4 engine will still be available, paired with a nine-speed automatic transmission.

New safety features include Lane-Keeping Assist, Autonomous Emergency Braking, and Attention Assist Estimation which monitors driver behaviour and sounds an alarm.

FORD GOES WILDER

The Ford Wildlife Foundation, which has assisted with over 150 projects and invested over R30-million over the past 25 years, is expanding its contribution into the rest of Africa.

The FWF, supported with vehicles and finance by Ford Southern Africa, is involved in environmental education, research and conservation projects around South Africa. These include the Black Rhino Project in KwaZulu-Natal, the Enkangala Grasslands Project in Mpumalanga, the Free State and KZN, and the Zululand Nile Crocodile research project run by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



END OF AN ERA

The staff of SA4x4 would like to extend their deepest sympathies to the family, friends and associates of Chris Swanepoel, who passed away suddenly in February.

His business, Chris Mod 4x4 Conversions, of Pretoria East, was well-known for its V8 Lexus conversions. His sons Braam and Mauritz will now run the company.



TRAILBLAZER A HIT IN ZIM

Zimbabwe has emerged as a key market for the Chevrolet Trailblazer, which in 2014 gained 19.8% market share in the medium SUV segment, after being introduced in 2012. It's a capable, seven-seater vehicle with 230mm of ground clearance, a limited-slip differential, available in both 2WD and 4WD, and in a choice of petrol and turbodiesel engines. Standard safety and comfort kit is extensive, including such things as cruise control, multi-function steering, and six airbags, with electronic stability control in the top LTZ models.

SMARTER RANGER

Ford Ranger top derivatives are now available with the parent company's SYNC Bluetooth and voice-control technology. It enables users to connect smartphones and digital media players to the vehicle's multimedia system.

Voice commands or inputs from the vehicle's steering-wheel-controls enable a range of functions: from selecting and calling contacts to listening to text messages. Storage capacity includes up to 12 phones, 150 voice commands and up to 1000 contacts. It will be available in the Ranger XLS, XLT and Wildtrak models at no additional cost.



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P Coetzee	'10 Ford Ranger 3.0 TDCi XLT Super cab	11.3	M Wels	'06 Isuzu KB 300 TDI LX DC	9.28
B Crossley	'04 Ford Ranger 4.0 XLE AT DC	15	G Goncalves	'01 Isuzu Frontier KB320	9.6
W Botha	'04 Ford Ranger 4.0 XLE AT DC	13.7	C Moller	'12 Isuzu NPS 300 4x4 motorhome	19
C Mans	'04 Ford Ranger 4.0 XLE AT DC	20	M Tuck	'14 Iveco Daily 4x4	14
AJ Horn	'06 Ford Ranger 4.0 XLE DC	16.13	P Nomdo	'07 Jeep Commander 30 CRD	10.8
GJ Visagie	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT DC	11.33	P Lourens	'02 Jeep Wrangler Sahara 4.0	21.32
H Vollgraaff	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT Super cab	10.3	D Webb	'12 Jeep Wrangler CRD	10.3
J Olivier	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT DC AT	11.60	A Lange	'07 Jeep Wrangler CRD Unlimited	11
P van Hoogdalem	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT DC AT	11.7	H Moolman	'10 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon	16.2
B Myburgh	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLT DC AT	9.5	J Viljoen	'08 Jeep Wrangler 3.8 V6	12.5
J Schwarting	'12 Ford Ranger 3.2 XLS Super cab	11.35	H Wagener	'11 Jeep Wrangler 3.8	14.2
J Serfontein	'13 Ford Ranger 2.2 DC	8.7	D Cholewka	'04 Jeep Wrangler Sahara 4.0	16.8
J Theys	'10 Ford Everest 3.0 td	11.21	R de Kock	'08 Jeep Wrangler CRD	12.5
K Loots	'12 Foton Tunland 2.8 DC 4x4 Lux	10.60	C Smith	'12 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon Unlimited	14.8
J Uys	GM Hummer H3 Adventure	14.4	A Kruger	'12 Jeep Wrangler Sahara Unlimited	16
Z Scheepers	GM Hummer H3 Adventure 3.7 AT	15.6			

P van der Byl	'04 Jeep Grand Cherokee 4.7 HO Overland	16.80	J Lawrence	'99 Land Rover Freelander 1 1.8i 5-door	10.7
JD Truter	'06 Jeep Grand Cherokee 5.7	15.8	W van der Sandt	'67 Land Rover Series 2A 2.25	20.8
A Kemp	'07 Jeep Grand Cherokee 5.7	14.9	W Olivier	'10 Mahindra Thar 2.5 CDR	8.9
F Joubert	'01 Jeep Grand Cherokee 2.7 CRD	10	S de Beer	'10 Mahindra Thar 2.5 CDR	10.33
A Kroep	'06 Jeep Grand Cherokee CRD	11.5	N Maritz	'13 Mazda BT-50 3.2 SLE DC AT	10.2
C Brown	'12 Jeep Grand Cherokee CRD Limited	9.7	D Booysen	'07 Mazda BT-50 3000 CRDi	10.2
A Olivier	'11 Jeep Grand Cherokee 3.6 Overland	13.58	L Schoeman	'13 Mazda BT-50 3.2 SLE DC AT	13.2
E Venter	'95 Jeep Grand Cherokee 5.2 V8 AT	16	Deon Schoeman	'14 Mazda BT-50 3.2 A/T	9.0
T Odendaal	'06 Jeep Grand Cherokee 5.7 Hemi	15.5	C Prinsloo	'03 Mazda Drifter 2.6i	12.8
A Rajcoomar	'12 Jeep Grand Cherokee 3.6 Limited	14.2	D le Roux	'03 Mazda Drifter 2.6i Drifter LWB	14.35
L Houtzager	'12 Jeep Grand Cherokee 3.6 Limited	11	J Whitlow	'04 Mazda Drifter 2.5 TDI	12.15
D Bailanis	'09 Jeep Cherokee 2.8 CRD	10.6	F Retief	'07 Mazda Drifter 2.5 SLE DC	11.2
J Kemp	'04 Jeep Cherokee Sport 2.4i	13.6	E. Valls	'00 Mercedes-Benz GL300	13.5
G Coles	'05 Jeep Cherokee Sport 2.4i	11.9	T Jansen	'04 Mercedes-Benz ML270CDi	10.7
J Kemp	'04 Jeep Cherokee Sport 2.4i	9.9	N Moodley	'03 Mercedes-Benz ML270CDi	10.5
C van Rensburg	'99 Jeep Cherokee 2.5 CRD	12.49	K Mundell	'10 Mercedes-Benz ML350 AT	12.91
D Mathewson	'04 Jeep Cherokee 2.8 CRD AT	10.5	G Poley	'09 Mercedes-Benz ML350 CDI	11.7
J Wewege	'05 Jeep Cherokee 2.8 CRD Sport	9	P de Kock	'11 Mazda BT50 3.0 CRD DC	9.4
M Melton	'06 Jeep Cherokee 2.8 CRD	10.9	M Swanepoel	'08 Mercedes-Benz GL320 CDI	12.2
D Prinsloo	'03 Jeep Cherokee Sport 3.7 AT	11.8	R van Huyssteen	'04 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 2.8 TD DC	12
S Haywood	'05 Jeep Cherokee Renegade 3.7 AT	15.3	J Farrell	'00 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 2.8 TD	13
I du Toit	'06 Jeep Cherokee 3.7 AT	17.5	B Burger	'01 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 2.8 TD DC	10.2
R Herselman	'02 Jeep Cherokee 3.7 Limited	13.51	J Diedericks	'99 Mitsubishi Colt 2.8 TD DC	11.5
R Ramaano	'11 Jeep Cherokee 3.7 Limited	13	G Botha	'01 Mitsubishi Colt Clubcab 2.8 TD	11.4
J Coetzee	'01 Jeep Cherokee 4.0 Sport	15.29	C Fourie	'06 Mitsubishi Colt Clubcab 2.8 TD	11.4
J Brits	'03 Jeep Cherokee 3.7 AT	10.09	E Fichardt	'01 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 3.0i DC	12.98
J Hontsch	'02 Jeep Cherokee KJ 2.5 CRD Ltd	10.3	C Prinsloo	'95 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 3.0 DC	12.7
G Livingstone	'08 Jeep Patriot 2.4 Limited	8.3	B de Klerk	'96 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 3.0	11.4
R Geel	'13 Jeep Patriot 2.4 Limited	10.6	M Koch	'03 Mitsubishi Colt Rodeo 3.0 DC	11.8
S van Rooyen	'09 Jeep Rubicon 2-dr	25.0	P Williamson	'02 Mitsubishi Colt 3.0 DC	13.1
C.L. Maritz	'06 Kia Sportage 2.0 CRDi	12.82	K Venter	'96 Mitsubishi Colt 3.0 DC	13.9
A Swanepoel	'14 Kia Sportage 2.0 D	8.3	A Marais	'06 Mitsubishi Colt 3.0i DC	11.8
G Loe	'01 Kia Sportage	12.22	A de Jager	'00 Mitsubishi Colt 3.0i DC	20
S Venter	'05 Kia Sorento 2.5 CRDi AT	12.5	J du Toit	'10 Mitsubishi Outlander 2.4 GLS AT	9.9
K Ballim	'10 Kia Sorento 2.2 d AT	11	I Makkink	'09 Mitsubishi Outlander 2.4 GLS AT	11.4
S Rayner-Payne	'99 Land Rover Defender 130 TD5	13.20	N Saunders	'08 Mitsubishi Outlander 2.4 AT	11
H Pieterse	Land Rover Defender 2.8 TDI	12.8	R Clifford	'08 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.8 V6 LWB	13.6
S Rayner-Payne	'99 Land Rover Defender 130 TD5	13.42	R Slepica	'99 Mitsubishi Pajero 2.8 diesel LWB	11.45
P Grant	'06 Land Rover Defender 90 TD5	11.8	B Haye	'98 Mitsubishi Pajero 2.8 diesel	14.52
S De Beer	'08 Land Rover Defender 90	9.1	G Young	'97 Mitsubishi Pajero 2800 GLX	9.5
N Steyn	'09 Land Rover Defender 110 SW	9.56	Louis de Wet	'14 Pajero Sport 2.5 DiD A/T 4x4	10.37
H Richardson	'04 Land Rover Defender 110 CSW TD5	10.4	G Wolfaardt	'10 Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 3.2 Di-D	10.8
C Campbell-Smart	'98 Land Rover Defender 110 2.8 Hardtop	13.48	A Bianco	'11 Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 3.2 Di-D	9.5
D Huysamen	'03 Land Rover Defender 110 TD5	12	H Le Roux	'10 Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 3.2 Di-D	11.0
K Joubert	'99 Land Rover Defender 2.8i	25	W Nieuwoudt	'11 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di-D GLX LWB AT	13.38
S Goldhawk	'10 Land Rover Defender 110 2.4	11.12	D Rossouw	'00 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di-D LWB Man	11.57
S de Villiers	'99 Land Rover Defender 110 CSW TD5	12.1	D Bosman	'07 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di-D GLX LWB	11.3
I Atcheler	'94 Land Rover Defender 110 3.5 V8	24.9	R Gardiner	'06 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di-D	10.2
J Snyman	'98 Land Rover Defender 2.5Tdi Hardtop	12.3	D van der Merwe	'03 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di-D LWB	9.09
N Bothma	'99 Land Rover Defender 130 Tdi	9.25	C Wessels	'00 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.5 V6	14.7
B Bradley	'04 Land Rover Defender 110 CSW TD5	9.4	V Kennedy-Van Dam	'98 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.5 V6	17.1
E van Huyssteen	'04 Land Rover Defender 110 TD5	10.8	H Booysse	'97 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.0 V6 SWB	15.8
G Greeff	'06 Land Rover Defender CSW TD5	12.4	C Goosen	'09 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.8 GLS LWB	15.32
F Malan	'06 Land Rover Defender 110	10.5	H Hechter	'12 Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 4x4 Di-D DC	9.8
J Wepener	'98 Land Rover Defender 2.8i 110 CSW	14.6	A Pretorius	'14 Mitsubishi Triton 2.5 Di-D DC	10.8
S Koivula	'93 Land Rover Defender 110 V8	15.5	F Visser	'07 Mitsubishi Triton 2.5 Di-D DC	10
S de Villiers	'99 Land Rover Defender 110 TD5	12.05	K Poole	'09 Mitsubishi Triton 2.5 Di-D DC	8.85
N Gilbert-Green	'90 Land Rover Defender 110 5.7 V8 (Chevy)	19.8	K Magadzi	'09 Mitsubishi Triton 2.5d DC	11.1
T Matthiessen	'10 Land Rover Defender 90	9.7	L Versfeld	'09 Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 Di-D DC	10.5
H van Heerden	'13 Land Rover Discovery SDV6 SE	9.1	G Anderson	'10 Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 Di-D DC	10.8
M Leighton	'07 Land Rover Discovery TDV6 S	9.3	M Steenkamp	'11 Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 Di-D CC	10.1
M de Beer	'Land Rover Discovery 2 4.0 V8 AT	15.38	P Greef	'12 Mitsubishi Triton 3.2 Di-D CC	10.1
W Rossouw	'13 Land Rover Discovery 4 TDV6 XS	11.7	J Jansen	'09 Mitsubishi Triton 3.5 V6 DC	16.07
G Bence	'96 Land Rover Discovery 1 300 Tdi	9.6	K van der Westhuizen	'09 Mitsubishi Triton 3.5 V6 DC	15.8
I de Villiers	'01 Land Rover Discovery 2 TD5 ES	10.95	B Church	'03 Nissan Hardbody 3.3 V6	14.28
F Engelbrecht	'99 Land Rover Discovery 2 TD5 ES	10.7	B Pienaar	'01 Nissan Hardbody 2.4i SC	14.3
K Gordon	'99 Land Rover Discovery 2 TD5	12	M Stevens	'00 Nissan Hardbody 3.0i SE DC	13.3
M Havemann	'03 Land Rover Discovery 2 TD5 XS	13	R Hanekom	'13 Nissan Hardbody 2.5 Tdi DC	12
F Wassermann	'00 Land Rover Discovery 2 V8 GS AT	15.83	H Meyer	'04 Nissan Hardbody 3.0 TD DC	11.1
R Wyatt-Goodall	'03 Land Rover Discovery 2 V8	15.1	J Stassen	'02 Nissan Hardbody SE 3.0i DC	16.6
M Daniell	'08 Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 HSE	10.6	I Griesel	'06 Nissan Hardbody 3.0 TD DC	9.9
A Matthews	'06 Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 SE	11.05	L Hymers	'05 Nissan Hardbody 3.0 TC DC	10.1
H Pretorius	'09 Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 SE	10.6	C Townsend	'05 Nissan Hardbody 3.3 V6	16.6
G Baird	'06 Land Rover Discovery 3 4.0 V8	14	G Brittnell	'06 Nissan Hardbody 3.3 V6 DC	15.3
J Labuschagne	'06 Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 SE	12.5	D Nel	'06 Nissan Hardbody 2.4 (16V)	13.3
L Schoeman	'07 Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 SE	12.76	B Williams	'11 Nissan Navara 2.5 LE	7.5
D Bush	'05 Land Rover Discovery 3 4.0 V8	14.2	H vd Westhuizen	'10 Nissan Navara 2.5 DC	10.5
I McNeil	'11 Land Rover Discovery 4 SDV6 SE	12.95	H Hitzeroth	'07 Nissan Navara V6 4.0 DC	17
C van den Berg	'12 Land Rover Discovery 4 SDV6 SE	11.2	J Joubert	'07 Nissan Navara V6 4.0 DC AT	14.8
S Legge	'12 Land Rover Discovery 4 SDV6 S	10.5	W Wright	'08 Nissan Navara V6 4.0	13
S van Rooyen	'13 Land Rover Discovery 4 SDV6 HSE	10.5	B Scheepers	'12 Nissan Navara 3.0 dCi	10.3
J Crain	'12 Land Rover Discovery 4 V8 SE	14.7	A Schonke	'05 Nissan Pathfinder V6 4.0	14.9
B Harvey	'13 Land Rover Discovery 4 TDV6 SE	9	W van Heerden	'11 Nissan Pathfinder V9X	10.9
D Dyson	'12 Land Rover Freelander 2 TD4 XS	7.4	A Visser	'09 Nissan Pathfinder	10
T Brown	'10 Land Rover Freelander 2 TD4 S AT	8.81	R de Kock	'05 Nissan Pathfinder 2.5d	10.5
B Rowland	'09 Land Rover Freelander 2 TD4 HSE	9.6	M van Dyk	'11 Nissan Pathfinder 3.0 dCi AT	13.48
D Asher	'10 Land Rover Freelander 2 TD4 SE Sport AT	9.6	L Jacobs	'13 Nissan Pathfinder 2.5d AT	10.2
C Moller	'11 Land Rover Freelander 2 SD4 2.2 Diesel A/T	9.6	J Schoeman	'02 Nissan Patrol 3.0d	13.42

FUEL LOG

Grant Flattery	'14 Nissan Patrol 3.0CRD	11.24	I Norval	'99 Toyota Hilux 2.7 SRX twin-cab	15.4
K du Toit	'99 Nissan Patrol 4.2d GL	11.8	T Du Toit	'05 Toyota Hilux 2.7i DC	14.7
A du Plessis	'96 Nissan Patrol 4.2 GQ	12.5	J van der Westhuizen	'07 Toyota Hilux 2.7 vvti DC	10.5
E Valtysson	'01 Nissan Patrol 4500 GRX	20.2	J Carter	'02 Toyota Hilux 2.7i DC	16.8
J Jordaan	'98 Nissan Patrol 4500 GRX	20	S Liddle	'02 Toyota Hilux 2.7i DC	15.7
A Doepeke	'06 Nissan Patrol 4.8 GRX AT	22.7	A Erasmus	'04 Toyota Hilux 2.7i DC	13
H Koch	'03 Nissan Patrol 4.8 AT	23.4	N Harrison	'95 Toyota Hilux 2.8 diesel DC	10.6
Grant Hobbs	'04 Nissan Patrol 4.8 petrol A/T	17.5	R Schutte	'10 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D Raider SC	9.2
H Behrtel	'04 Nissan Patrol 4.8 AT	18.7	M Irwin	'10 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D SC	9.63
R Claasen	'00 Nissan Patrol 4500 GRX	19.2	P Janse v Rensburg	'09 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	10.9
D Kleynhans	'96 Nissan Sani 3.0 V6 DC	13.5	C Arnold	'07 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	9.3
R Oosthuizen	'97 Nissan Sani 3.0 V6 turbo	18.1	G McCall	'09 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	11.6
W Venter	'95 Nissan Sani 3.0 V6 SW	14.8	S Colyn	'13 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	9.8
P Pretorius	'09 Nissan X-Trail 2.0 dci SE	9.1	E O'Gorman	'02 Toyota Hilux 3.0D	11
M Jacobs	'10 Nissan X-Trail 2.5 CVT	11.8	H Jansen v Vuuren	'09 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D	9.17
A Coetser	'01 Nissan Terrano 2.7 Tdi 5-door	11.3	A Carcenac	'01 Toyota Hilux 3.0 KZ-TE DC	11.4
G Foord	'02 Nissan Terrano 2.7 Tdi 3-door	11.35	K Lerwick	'07 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	10.38
V Cockcroft	'99 Nissan Terrano 2.7 Tdi 5-door	10.37	D von Brandis	'08 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D	11.43
KJ McKenzie	'01 Nissan Terrano II 3-door	10.4	J du Toit	'02 Toyota Hilux 3.0 KZ-TE DC	10.6
N Maddison	'06 Porsche Cayenne S 4.5 dfi	14.7	D Burger	'09 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	9.6
J Smit	'98 Range Rover 4.6 HSE V8	19.8	JA Odendaal	'06 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	12.1
H Basson	'05 Range Rover HSE 4.4 V8	20	T Mbaiwa	'11 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D	9.14
M Milne	'03 Range Rover TD6	11.8	PJ van Zyl	'13 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	10
A Matthews	'09 Range Rover Sport TDV8	13.6	H Schoeman	'05 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	8.3
B Wilson	'13 Renault Duster 1.5	6.9	T Newell	'14 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D SC	10.5
R Wilson	'02 SsangYong Korando 2.9 TD	9.8	S van Rooyen	'14 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D Double Cab 4x4	9.0
W Hoffe	'06 Subaru Forester 2.5 XT MT	10.78	M Labuschagne	'06 Toyota Hilux 4.0 V6 AT DC	12.82
A. Duncan-Brown	'12 Subaru Forester 2.0 D	7.4	L Myburgh	'05 Toyota Hilux 4.0 V6 man	13.3
J Elliott	'13 Subaru Forester 2.5 XS	10.4	J van den Heever	'07 Toyota Hilux 4.0 V6 AT DC	14.44
A Duncan	'12 Subaru Forester 2.0 D	8.2	J van Rensburg	'08 Toyota Hilux 4.0 DC AT	13.5
K Gerber	'06 Subaru Forester 2.5 XS AT	11.12	E Louw	'07 Toyota Hilux 4.0 DC	14.1
R Schuster	'06 Subaru Forester 2.5 XS	8.1	H Steenkamp	'12 Toyota Hilux 4.0 DC AT	14.02
J Farham	'08 Subaru Forester 2.5 XS AT	10.2	F Prins	'08 Toyota Hilux 4.0 DC	15.5
B Pruter	'05 Subaru Forester 2.5 XSEL	8.67	W Aston	Toyota Land Cruiser 79 4.0 V6 DC	16.1
R McLaggan	'11 Subaru Forester S Edition	11	T du Toit	Toyota Land Cruiser 4.0 V6 DC	25.2
J Elliot	'13 Subaru Forester 2.5 XS CVT	10.5	M Harvey	'91 Toyota Land Cruiser 80 4.2 TDI	18.12
L van Rooyen	'11 Suzuki Grand Vitara 2.4	10.5	N Pentz	'92 Toyota Land Cruiser VX 4.2	17
V Alder	'03 Suzuki Grand Vitara JLX	12.1	B Smith	'88 Toyota Land Cruiser FJ62 SW 4.0 petrol	17.8
H Korsch	'02 Suzuki Grand Vitara (SQ420)	9.82	T Schmidt	'05 Toyota Land Cruiser VX100 4.2 TD AT	14.6
B James	'11 Suzuki Grand Vitara 2.4	10.5	U Witte	'05 Toyota Land Cruiser VX100 4.7 V8	19
C Camp	'10 Suzuki Grand Vitara 2.4	10.9	G Eggert	'03 Toyota Land Cruiser VX100 4.2d AT	8.95
C Smith	'10 Suzuki Jimny	8.3	W Hindmarch	'03 Toyota Land Cruiser VX100 4.2d AT	15.15
M Cunningham	'13 Suzuki Jimny	8.36	C Mannington	'03 Toyota Land Cruiser 105 GX 4.5 EFI	20.2
W Buist	'13 Suzuki Jimny	7.69	J Jooste	'01 Toyota Land Cruiser 105 GX	16.9
T Forbes	'13 Suzuki Jimny	10.9	G Allen	'08 Toyota Land Cruiser 200 4.5d	16.1
C Kloppe	'10 Suzuki Jimny 1.3	9.7	H du Toit	'11 Toyota Land Cruiser 200 4.5d	12.5
I Gelderblom	'10 Suzuki Jimny 1.3	7.9	B Botes	'08 Toyota Land Cruiser 4.5 EFI pick-up	23
A Stoltz	'11 Suzuki Jimny 1.3	8.7	J Brayshaw	'06 Toyota Land Cruiser SC 4.5 EFI	22
P Lourens	'97 Suzuki Samurai SJ80 1.3	11.24	J Eger	'09 Toyota Land Cruiser 4.5 EFI pick-up	17.8
M Hoffe	'11 Suzuki SX4 2.0 MT	8.75	JC Steyn	'02 Toyota Land Cruiser 4.5 EFI pick-up	22.6
F Ihle	'10 Tata Xenon 2.2 Dicor DC	11.2	E Lombard	'08 Toyota Land Cruiser 70 SW	14.6
S Koivula	'08 Tata Telcoline diesel SC	8.9	D Norton	'04 Toyota Land Cruiser 70 DC 4.2d	13.64
C Steenkamp	'13 Touareg TDI BlueMotion	9.0	AM Bruce-Brand	'08 Toyota Land Cruiser 70 SW	13.6
I Smith	'95 Toyota 4Runner 3.0 V6	13	C Hopkins	'10 Toyota Land Cruiser 76 SW	11.19
H Wadvalla	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D 4x4 Auto	10	D.K van Niekerk	'14 Toyota Land Cruiser 76 SW V8 Diesel	11
J Kok	'12 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D 4X4	10.5	P Diener	'06 Toyota Land Cruiser 79 DC 4.2d	12.43
R Wilson	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D 4x4	10.5	K Joubert	'04 Toyota Land Cruiser 79 4.2d pick-up	10.9
P Jonischkeit	'14 Toyota Fortuner 4x4	8.3	W Eksteen	'10 Toyota Land Cruiser 79 SC V6 pick-up	16
S Kotze	'07 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	9.1	T du Toit	'11 Toyota Land Cruiser Troopie 4.2	14.4
C Barry	'06 Toyota Fortuner 4.0 V6	12.9	S van Rooyen	'14 Toyota FJ Cruiser	16.0
S Louw	'07 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	10.5	T Bekker	'11 Toyota Prado 4.0 V6	13.8
J Sadie	'07 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	10.5	A Stamrood	'10 Toyota Prado 3.0 D VX	10.01
Kobus Meyer	'07 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	9.62	M Cubitt	'10 Toyota Prado 3.0 D VX AT	10.4
D Salzmann	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	9.82	S Roberts	'03 Toyota Prado 3.0 D	12.6
R Jansen	'08 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	8.69	F van Eeden	'00 Toyota Prado 3.4 GX AT	14.95
Andrew von Mayer	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D	8.3	L Fourie	'99 Toyota Prado 3.4 V6	14.3
HJ van Vuuren	'14 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D AT	11.8	T du Toit	'10 Toyota Prado D4-D	13.6
H Kilpatrick	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D AT	12.23	R Louw	'98 Toyota Prado 3.4 VX AT	15.3
J du Preez	'10 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D AT	10	Deon Schoeman	'08 Toyota Prado 4.0 auto	12.4
C Kasselman	'11 Toyota Fortuner 3.0 D-4D AT	10	B Bartholomew	'09 Toyota Prado 4.0 V6	14.5
A Kleynhans	'08 Toyota Fortuner 4.0	15.7	G van der Merwe	'07 Toyota Prado 4.0 V6	13.34
R Welte	'08 Toyota Fortuner 4.0 manual	15	H Williams	'96 Toyota Prado 3.0d VX AT	11
J van Greunen	'07 Toyota Fortuner 4.0 manual	11.8	S Williams	'12 Volvo XC60 D5	7.79
O Ferreira	'07 Toyota Fortuner 4.0	16.8	L Du Plessis	'05 Volvo XC90 2.5T Geartronic	15.4
K Palos	'11 Toyota Fortuner 4.0 AT	12.29	G Cunningham	'06 Volvo XC90 2.5T	13.3
J van Wyk	'11 Toyota FJ Cruiser	13.2	G Visser	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	8.9
R Morrison	'14 Toyota FJ Cruiser	13.02	N Ehlers	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	9.8
G Carnie	'11 Toyota FJ Cruiser	13	E Gehring	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	7.6
K Thompson	'11 Toyota FJ Cruiser	15	D Bishop	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	8.2
K Joubert	'12 Toyota FJ Cruiser	13.5	R Griesel	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	7.9
P Jonischkeit	'11 Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-4D DC	10.1	G Coertze	'13 VW Amarok 2.0 DC AT	8.5
C Chambers	'09 Toyota Hilux 4.0 DC AT	12.82	C de Wet	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 DC	9.6
J Crafford	'11 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D SRX SC	8.35	Johann Bongartz	'11 VW Amarok 2.0 Diesel 120kW 4Motion	10.1
AR Post	'09 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D SRX S/Cab	9.7	A Meldrum	'10 VW Tiguan 1.4 TSI	9.6
L Bond	'95 Toyota Hilux 2.4 Raider DC	16.2	J Nel	'12 VW Tiguan 2.0 Tdi	6.7
H Stoltz	'07 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D SRX DC	10.06	H Baard	'07 VW Touareg 3.0 TDI Tiptronic	11.5
W Walker	'10 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D SRX DC	9.11	J Joubert	'05 VW Touareg R5 TDI	10.2
J Oosthuizen	'14 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D SRX DC	8.96	H Kerkovius	'07 VW Touareg 3.0 TDI Tiptronic	10.4
K Els	'04 Toyota Hilux 2.7i DC	13.5	G Labuschagne	'12 VW Touareg 3.0 TDI Tiptronic	10.4

ME & MY 4x4

PAM HARTH

2008 Mitsubishi Colt

Age: 58

Occupation: Teacher.

Modifications: ARB bullbar with KC spots and winch, dual 105Ah batteries and management system, roof racks, aluminium Outback canopy and roof carrier on top, Outback double-drawer system, LED lights in canopy, Old Man Emu suspension, additional long-range tank (total 150 litres). An inverter is fitted for charging items and powering additional lights. For communications, there is a VHF as well as a 29MHz radio. A three-metre awning is used when shade is required – it's quick to fit. The motor has been chipped, gas-flowed and a performance exhaust fitted.

Future modifications: I want to fit a solar panel to assist charging of the second battery when on trips in Botswana as the vehicle is not always on the move.

Dream vehicle: A Toyota Land Cruiser. Yes, it is not a speed merchant, but is extremely reliable, tough, and has great power for towing a heavy 4x4 caravan (which we sometimes use).

Most memorable trips: Most of these have been in Botswana – Chobe, Okavango, Nxai Pan, Savute, Baines Baobabs. In South Africa – Die Hel, Baviaanskloof.

Planned Trips: Heading off to the Mdumbi River on the Wild Coast to do some fishing, and to the Central Kalahari in 2016.

I never leave the home without: My husband, Mr McGyver.



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TO ENTER

One Fredlin hoist will be given away every month to the lucky reader featured in Me & My 4x4. Simply send a photograph – 1 MB or larger – and the answers to the categories shown above, to editor@sa4x4.co.za. Vehicle and driver must be featured together in an off-road setting. (No driveway shots, please.)

COMPETITION RULES

The decision as to which entries are featured rests solely with SA4x4; no correspondence will be entered into on this issue. Should Fredlin retract their sponsorship, SA4x4 reserves the right to publish any entries received without awarding any prize.

CONTACT FREDLIN

For more information on the Fredlin hoist, go to www.fredlin.co.za or contact Freddie Badenhorst on 082 553 0555, 012 661 8939 or sales@fredlin.co.za.





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